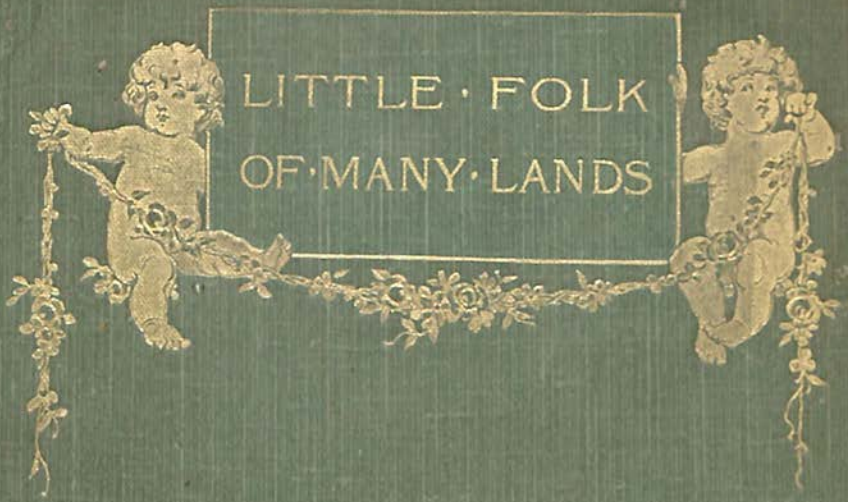

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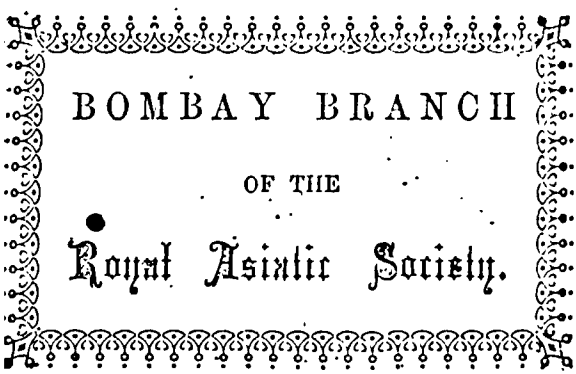

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LITTLE FOLK OF MANY LANDS

A HINDU BRIDEGROOM GOING TO HIS MARRIAGE

Frontispiece

LITTLE FOLK OF MANY LANDS

By LOUISE JORDAN MILN

AUTHOR OF

"WHEN WE WERE STROLLING PLAYERS IN THE EAST," "QUAINT KOREA"

ETC. ETC.

20032

"The vines
That bear such fruit are proud to stoop with it.
The palm stands upright in a realm of sand."

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TO

MY CHILDREN

CRICHTON, MONA, HAZEL, GEORGE
AND DAGMAR

PREFACE

A QUARTER of a century ago, and more—it was March 5, 1873—my father and I sat huddled luxuriously on the warm Neapolitan sand. We watched Vesuvius lightly tossing skyward delicate sprays of smoke. We watched the blue, blue water at our feet, and the faint, opalescent outlines of distant Capri. We watched the pink and golden sunset as it glowed upon the grey trunks, the green leaves, and the yellow fruit of the grove behind us. A fruit-stone's throw beyond us, and just so much nearer the seductive Mediterranean water, squatted a trio of children. The two boys had their evening meal of bread and chestnuts laid between them, and the baby (almost as big as they), lying in the low willow basket, had a milk-bottle and a jingling string of sea-shells.

It was my ninth birthday, and, because of something my father said to me as we sat together there, I remember that birthday apart from and beyond all my other birthdays.

I think that I have not forgotten much out of all that my father ever said to me. We were never apart far or long. We had few other friends, he or I; we wished for none. Our intimacy was, without qualification, complete; but it was never, on his part at least, an intimacy of many

words. He was so silent a man that only I, I think, knew that he had many theories of his own and many intense convictions. He was so conventional in behaviour and appearance that I am convinced that no one but myself ever dreamed how radical, and even iconoclastic, many of these theories and convictions were. Even to me he rarely volunteered an opinion. Perhaps that was the reason why I so gladly listened to him on the far-apart occasions when he pointedly turned my attention to some subject that lay near his heart. I was a child of many questions—to him. He never once put me off with an unconsidered answer, nor with a quick one. He never gave me stone for bread; but he never urged his bread upon me. I knew that it was there, and that I was welcome to it—to the utmost crumb. That was all. And how I liked it!

It is perhaps not strange that I remember so many of his words, since among them all I can recall no word of his that was not both sweet and sound; and I recall nothing else so characteristic of him as was our talk on my birthday in Naples. We had been silent for a long time, a very long time, considering my sex and my age; but it was, as I have said, our wont. At length he turned and said, "We have been in Italy for more than six months now. What do you think the most interesting thing that you have seen in Italy?"

"The Pope's library and Victor Emmanuel," I answered. I was not a modest child, and I had (or liked to affect) some catholicity of taste.

My father smiled and shook his head.

"What do you?" I asked.

He pointed to the half-clad children playing near us. "There is nothing in all the world so important as children," he said, "nothing so interesting. If you ever wish to go in for some philanthropy, if you ever wish to be of any real use in the world, do something for children. If you ever yearn to be truly wise, study children. We can dress the sore, bandage the wounded, imprison the criminal, heal the sick, and bury the dead; but there is always a chance that we can *save* a child. If the great army of philanthropists ever exterminate sin and pestilence, ever work out our race's salvation, it will be because a little child has led them."

He doubtless used rather simpler words than these, but this is the sense of what he said. It was twenty-six years ago, and I have followed his advice ever since. From then until now I have watched children, meaning to try some day to do some small thing for or about children. I remember that, as a child, I disliked children, but I began then and there to think about them.

When we got back to Rome, a week after my Naples birthday, I began to fill a blank book with astonishing notes about Italian children, and I have never quite abandoned the habit. I had no dream of authorship in those days. The little that I have written has been altogether the outcome of a more recent friend's wish, but I think that I may truly say that these pages are the outcome—one outcome—of my father's desire. He sowed in my heart a seed—a seed of interest in children. Time ripened it into stem and leaf. My own children have sunned it

into luxuriance, into flower and fruit. They have clung tight about my neck and made me very humble, and, I trust, a little wise; and so not to my father, but to his only grandchildren, I offer this volume.

To others I offer the book for what it is worth to them. To say that it is not a scholarly book were superfluous; but I may say emphatically that it is a book of no pretensions to scholarship. It is a sheaf of gleanings about children. Most of it represents some patience and pleasant work. For me most of its pages mark bright memories of long and happy years of distant and delightful travel. All of it represents much very sincere love. I have tried to give glimpses of the little ones of other lands, for I believe that, if we could become acquainted with other nations through their children, we should go a long way toward the consummation of universal brotherly love and world-wide peace.

Moreover, we should find a new and fascinating interest added to our travels. To ask why the majority of travellers go abroad at all, would be to ask a futile question. To investigate it would be saddening. But a great many people travel wisely and worthily, and with some earnest purpose of self-benefit or of benefit to others. I am convinced that almost all such travellers make this one mistake: they study the men and women of other nations far more than they study the children. We live for years in Persia or Siam, and try very hard to reach "the heart that beats behind the impenetrable Oriental mask." We fail; and we come away wondering why we have failed. We fail because we make but blundering advances to

the self-conscious, suspicious men and women who always live with their masks on, and no advances to the unconscious children who know nothing of racial barriers, and never wear a mask.

In the West this is the age of children. Children have been equally loved, perhaps, in all ages; but never before have children been so considered, so studied. New systems of education have been carefully devised for them. The making of their garments has become as elaborate and as profitable an industry as that of fashioning clothes for adults. Their amusement, their pleasure, have become a matter of so much concern that science and art now preside over the toy factory; and in the streets where rents are highest, toy shops and sweet shops crowd among the shops of silversmiths and the shops of sellers of French bonnets. We love and study our own children. Why not pay some attention to those of other lands?

This volume will attempt to show some of the children of the globe "in their habits as they live." It will be delightful to look upon them in all their different costumes (and some of them in none); and if we can catch glimpses of them at their play, if we can get a peep at what they eat, and how they live, it will be far more interesting to some of us than the study of hieroglyphics or of fossils. And may there not be a more serious object in this study of the children of our world? If we could study it thoroughly enough, if we could learn how the children of different nations differ from each other, and where they resemble each other, why then we might

find that some light had been thrown upon the future of the world.

The only fitness I can plead for undertaking this fascinating and most delicate task is the fitness that comes of being a mother, and a mother whose peculiarly nomadic life, and whose prolonged sojourns in many strange places, have made her familiar with the little children of many races. I am not a very young woman. I have been almost an incessant traveller, since before I was three years old. I have also been intimate with books all my life. Of all things, the three that interest me most are books, children, and travel. By travel I mean, now and always, the travel that leads to acquaintance with peoples and manners and customs, even more than with topography and scenery. I am far more interested in travel and in children than I am in books, and I think travel and children more worthy of interest.

I believe, too, that travel is good for children, and that they can hardly begin to travel too soon. I am aware that many will differ from me here, but I rely upon my own experience. I know what travel was to me as a child, and what it has been to my own children. It is from travel, not from books, that particular, vivid, truthful, and lasting observations may be made. It is travel, above everything else, that develops a child's faculties of discernment, and teaches it to judge and to think for itself. It is travel that breeds or develops common sense, the most useful attribute any man can have. It is travel that uproots prejudice. It is, in large part, travel that makes people companionable. It begets ease of manner and

savoir faire. And I think that a book about foreign children will show our own children, when they travel, one class of objects at least which they may observe, and in which they are likely to take an early interest.

Much travel and some books for the young!

Many books and some jaunts for the old!

Shall I dread old age—I who have travelled far and wide in my youth? Not I. All hail, old age!

"It drives me in upon myself and to the fireside gleams,
To pleasant books that crowd my shelf, and still more pleasant dreams.
I read whatever bards have sung of lands beyond the sea,
And the bright days when I was young come thronging back to me.
I fancy I can hear again the Alpine torrent's roar,
The mule-bells on the hills of Spain, the sea at Elsinore.
I see the convent's gleaming wall rise from its groves of pine,
And towers of old cathedrals tall, and castles on the Rhine.
I journey on by park and spire, beneath centennial trees,
Through fields with poppies all on fire, and gleams of distant seas."

The world is full of gladness and of gloom. We cannot travel very far without coming across suffering children. I can recall but few countries in which I have not seen child-suffering that maddened one to look upon. Oh, for the birth of some great prophet now, that even as our century dies his mighty voice might cry out of the wilderness until all earth rang with its echo, and all men heeded the terrible question, "These sheep, what have they done?"

Qualifying nothing, and forgetting nothing, I still believe that we have more cause for hope than for fear. I have hope that all things will yet work together for international good and fireside happiness. We have wasted time enough

over the question, "Is marriage a failure?"—the most absurd question that could be asked in a world full of children. Let us be up and doing now. Each of us can do something very blessed, if it is only to hold a cup of cold water to some baby's parched lips.

I have faith to hope for the coming of a great and a good time to our race and to the home, because a little child shall lead them, because a little child shall link them, because little children shall redeem them.

L. J. M.

LONDON, *September 30th*, 1899.

NOTE.—Many of the photographs with which I have illustrated this volume were taken for me by personal friends. For others, and for permission to use them, I am indebted and am grateful to Messrs. Bourne and Sheppard, of Bombay; Tabor, of San Francisco; Summerhayes, of Montreal; Standish and Preece, of New Zealand; Brogi, of Naples; and the Söstrene Persen, of Bergen.

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LITTLE FOLK OF MANY LANDS

CHAPTER I.

PICKANINNIES.

"You are lublier dan de day,
Your eyes so bright
Dey shine at night,
When de moon am gone away."

THE cheerfullest, the very cheerfullest, thing on earth is a well-fed but not over-clad pickaninny.

What is a pickaninny? Why, it's a roly-poly black baby. "Pickaninny" is the name that Americans have given to the children of their dear faithful black folk.

I believe that half the sunshine in the southern half of the United States (and where is sunshine brighter?) is made by the darkies.

And yet we stole them; they do not belong to North America at all? True! Indisputably true. We, that is our ancestors, stole them. But were not they lucky, those bad, bold ancestors of ours, to steal anything so delightful? When before has any man—have any men—succeeded in stealing sunshine? Why, only think what

happened to poor Prometheus when he merely tried to steal sunshine's poor inadequate counterfeit presentment.

The men who kidnapped the natives upon the banks of the Niger river were very culpable. Very. But their villainy has developed into great happiness for their descendants.

This is worthy of emphatic note, because it is the only demonstrable human instance of the sins of the fathers having accrued to the great and blessed benefit of the sons. Ah, yes, our forefathers were shocking fellows! But they were in their wickedness uniquely happy to have stolen sunshine—pure, unadulterated sunshine.

And then, too, our claim to the darkies is quite as good as our claim to North America. We have, on the whole, treated the blacks whom we stole from Africa far better than we have treated the cinnamon-coloured men from whom we stole North America. Yes, we have treated the Negroes far better than we have treated the North American Indians. It is most saddening to look upon the children of those Indians. It is most jolly to look upon the pickaninnies. Five things are necessary to the entire happiness of a darkie child, and five only—food, any amount of good food, warmth, ample leisure, fellowship, and an adequate escape-valve for its superlative and ineradicable emotionalness. The darkie children are naturally fat, and it seems their strongest instinct to increase their natural plumpness. In the South they will lie in the sun all day and suck sugar-cane; and three times a day they will pause to eat a square meal of possum pot-pie, of fried chicken, of sweet-potato pie, and of doughnuts.

It will be interesting to find out, if we can, when we

come to consider the children of Africa, whether the pickaninny's great passion for good food is inherited from his distant ancestors, or whether it is the accrued result of the lavish tables of the southern planters—tables from which the Negroes of the place, and especially the children, caught great fist-fulls of toothsome crumbs. This is certain: the darkies in their age and in their youth are gluttons, epicures, and superb cooks. Every darkie can cook. The most delicious sweet potatoes I ever ate were roasted by a darkie boy of seven. By the way, he had stolen them, and his master, from whom he had stolen them, was a member of the picnic party to which he sold them. That did not disconcert Pete a bit. He made deftly his fire of corn husks and corn cobs, and grinned impudently into his master's face. His master laughed and threw him a dime. The southern darkies have great perquisites, especially the children. There is no perquisite that they value so highly as their half-acknowledged right to steal edibles. Next to being fed, a pickaninny likes to be warm. Of all warmths he most likes the warmth of the sunshine. Failing that, he likes to roll himself in thick possum skins, or coon skins, and crouch in front of a huge fire.

The only baths of which he is madly fond are sun baths and mud baths. Into a bath which combines both he plunges with ecstasy.

But oh, how his mother scrubs him, at least once a day—if he has had the rare luck to be born on an old Virginia plantation—and how his face shines after it. His gleaming black face reflects the sunshine from without and perspires sunshine from within. And where the sun of heaven strikes most directly on his fat face it

makes dazzling white high lights on his black, black skin.

The pickaninnies are industrious in nothing but happiness. What better industry could children exercise? They do no voluntary over-work. Their love of leisure, their enjoyment of leisure, is a constant reproach to the Anglo-Saxons of America, who never take leisure; and if it is sometimes thrust upon them by accident, by great wealth, or by social ambition, it embarrasses them; they are not capacitated to enjoy it. But the black babies of the transplanted Negro race, they appreciate leisure to the full. They roll among the sugar-cane and corn, they wallow in the yellow sunshine, and they are as happy as the mocking birds, whose music they echo. The darkies are all musical. If their music is rather primitive, it is vastly sweet. Every darkie boy and girl can whistle wonderfully; they mock the black birds, the robins, the thrushes, and whip-o'-wills, and a score of other wild birds, with the perfection of imitation. They sing, too, like the full-throated black angels that they are. If those that are American-born hear them singing in far-off Australia or in grey London, their eyes fill and their throats choke; but when they sing at home—when they gather about their vine-covered huts—ah! then their songs come rich with all the plaintive majesty of primitive melody and of genuine feeling, come perfumed with the breath of magnolias, the scent of bananas, the fragrance of the orange flowers, and the sharp, keen, stimulating smell of the lemon trees. And lest one's nostrils grow too sentimental, they catch the bouquet of the boiling pot that bubbles above the brisk fire of crimson sticks burning outside the cabin door. One smells pork and onions,

sweet potatoes, and possum, bits of chicken, tomatoes, gumbo, and ripe nuts.

When they have emptied the pot even the children are too tired to sing. Then they bring their banjos out from the cabins. The sun has quite set, and the stars look a long way off as we see them through the tall, moss-hung trees; but our hearts and our ears grow glad as the big musical fingers thrum on the old banjos. No matter if the fire goes out and the stars veil themselves with clouds, the darkies pick instinctively the music from the strings of their old banjos; the tiniest pickaninny there is incapable of a discord. Music, simple, but oh! so sweet, is his heritage—a heritage of which he can never be robbed. Their voices are as true, as rich, and as wonderful as the voices of the mocking birds, whose song they so love.

No darkie child likes to be alone. With him companionship is instinctive. For this reason, perhaps, they are the easiest-going in their friendships, the most faithful in their services, of the children of any race. They love to be with someone—boon-companion or master; and when human fellowship fails them they make friends of the squirrels and butterflies, and chum with the roses and the jessamine.

They are not highly educated, the little black creatures who make swings of the long grey Florida moss, but they are the supreme masters of the philosophy of happiness, and they are the most attractive when they are, conventionally speaking, the least educated. The pickaninnies are not born intellectual, but they are born imaginative. It is vulgarly said that they lie. They do nothing of the kind. They imagine; and is not imagination the natural heritage of a race of black children, a large proportion of

whose boys are called "George Washington," "Pete," "Sambo," and "Launcelot," and a large proportion of whose girls are christened "May," "Mabel," "Christobel," "Diana," "Lily," "Minerva," and "Imogen"?

The North-American darkies are faithful unto death. There is nothing else, save only a Newfoundland dog, quite so faithful as a southern darkie. Even the children are staunch. In nothing are they more exceptional than in their affection, their fidelity, their contentedness, their enjoyment of creature comforts, and their merriness.

There is nothing brighter, gladder, more enjoyable than the black babies who tangle their fat limbs among the lush of almost tropic flowers. They have comical, plump, black bodies, thick red lips, perfect teeth, throats full of instinctive song, ugly, tightly-curling woolly hair, and brave, contented, and withal philosophical hearts — big hearts that are full almost to bursting with the creamy "milk of human kindness."

And so you see that I, at least, think that quite the most delicious thing that grows in the New World is the best type of American darkie. And not even the dear old "uncles," or the dearer old "mammies," the white-wooled grand-mammies, or the woolless grand-daddies, are so droll or so adorable as the black babies, the brown urchins, the chocolate-tinted little girls—bless their beaming black faces, their tender, merry, white hearts, their plump, lazy persons! They are brilliant black sunshine; they are black diamonds; they are sable nightingales, always on the sing; their throats and their lungs are inexhaustible cellars of vocal wine—wine as inspiring and as sparkling as Clicquot, as tender, as mellow, as soothing, as rich as Oporto, and always on the tap. The picka-

PHILOSOPHERS

To face p. 6

ninnies of the southern states — how they sing! how they sleep! how they pilfer! above all, how they eat! And how immense an amount of comfort and enjoyment they get out of life! They are never very brave (except when those they love are in great peril), they are never very stoical, but they have a very serviceable philosophy of their own, and they obey its commandments rigidly. Rigidly! I withdraw the word. It is too absurdly out of the picture when used in juxtaposition to the pickaninnies. All the darkies, particularly the children, observe the tenets of their philosophy with unremittent fervour. There, that's more appropriately put. It is a happy-go-lucky philosophy, altogether adapted to the mental, moral, and socal uses of the happy-go-luckiest of earth's creatures. These are its teachings: "*Laissez faire!* Take anything you like, if you can get it, and dare. Never be in a hurry, except to avoid trouble or work. Eat as often and as much as possible. Never stop eating if you can help it. Keep in the sun. Have a good time!"

Look at the three fellows in the accompanying picture The boys are just as they were when the artist spied them on the streets of Louisville, and offered them five cents each to come and be photographed. Don't you like them, rags and all? I more than like them. I admire them, on my word I do. Philosophers! I should rather think they were! Lots they care about the present condition of European politics; they are not even exercised over to-morrow's dinner; not they! Anxiety might mar their appetite, and that must be preserved at all costs. Moreover, the world owes them an unlimited number of unlimited dinners, and they are confiding, and fully expect and intend the world to fulfil its obligation. Shabby!

Well, what of it? They live "down South," and the holes let the air in, and the sunshine, and the nice warm dust. Like their elders, the darkie children are passionately fond of showy raiment. They dote upon dress; but if they can't be clad in purple and crimson and yellow, splendid of surface and elaborate of embellishment, the nearer approach they can make to nudity the happier they are. And, bless you, they know that their rags are picturesque; for in their own ponderous, indolent way they are artists, and *poseurs* every black man Jack of them. Do look at the chap in the centre! No, he has not a startlingly intellectual cast of countenance, that I admit—I must. But what statesman in Europe can boast so philosophical a face? He is the personification of calm, well-balanced, ruminating sensibleness. No nineteenth century nonsense about him. No soul-worrying, nerve-destroying, body-wrecking hurry and flurry and excitement about him. No American rush and over-tension. His fat round head may not be aseethe with brains, but it's chock-a-block full of common sense. He is not energetic, but he has a commensurate repose of intellect. What if he has not much mind at all? It gives him the less trouble to make that mind up about anything, and he hates trouble with a hatred that is actually active. His name is Leander Clay Vanderbilt, and he regards it as congruous—peculiarly so now—for he is almost instantly to receive a "nickel," a sum equal to twopence-halfpenny. Then will he hie him to the nearest "candy" shop and buy him five bull's-eyes, big ones, striped and arrogantly redolent of peppermint. He will put one under his tongue, and one on each side of it, and if his cheeks will stretch far enough he will stow the other two somewhere else in his mouth. Then he will

RATHER RAGGED

To face p. 8

subside on to the ground or the kerb, in some sunny spot, and be at peace with himself and all mankind, while the bull's-eyes trickle slowly and in thick drops down his ecstatic throat. And the urchin on the right! Isn't he passing jolly? Where can we match him in our London streets?

The condition of the darkie children in the North is deplorable in many respects. But I am writing now of the darkies of the South, and in the South (which is happily recovering from the fearful poverty entailed by the cruel civil war) the coloured children are almost all well fed, well cared for, and happy. Even those who have no fixed habitation, and drift from sunny city to sunny village, seldom want for food, and never for kindness. A sympathy and an affection which are very warm and very real exist between the whites and the blacks of the South, notably between the best classes of both. And it speaks volumes for those who were masters and those who were slaves before the war, that in thousands of instances the relations of the two are, to all intents and purposes, what they were before the war.

The child who is born in a droll, picturesque cabin on a Southern plantation is born into an existence of plenty, of abundance of creature comforts, and of utter irresponsibility—an existence which fits its pleasure-loving, lazy nature like a glove. The first lesson that child learns is a lesson of love, fidelity, and trust towards the "family," the old Southern family into whose service it is born. The second lesson the small black is taught is to despise all "poor white trash," and all not "quality" darkies. "White trash" means all white people whose ancestors did not own slaves, but worked for their living. A

"quality" darkie is one coming from good old slave stock. My old black mammy had been in her childhood thoroughly inoculated with both these lessons. She tyrannised over me long after I was a woman grown; she slaved for me day and night, but she would do no hand's turn for any other human creature except my father, whom she had also nursed in all his childhood. Nothing would induce her to sit down with our white servants. She ate her meals alone and in state; she had a fine contempt for the northern city in which we lived. When I was about eighteen my father picked up and took under his wing a poor, black, stray waif of about twelve. Jim proved too supreme an imp for even my father's superb patience, and was handed over to me. Mammy's rage knew no bounds; she stormed, she sulked, she had violent hysterics, and she took to her bed—her death-bed, as she said—and to the day on which she really did die she fought Jim and hated him. And why? Not because he was a "limb"; not because he stole (as he openly did from everyone in the house but me); not because he very nearly plagued the life out of her; not because she was jealous of him. No; but because he wasn't a "quality" nigger. Jim had no pedigree. His father hadn't been a slave, and he had not been brought up on a plantation—had never even seen one. Dear old, unreasonable mammy, she loved me as I have never been loved except by her, a Newfoundland dog, and an Indian monkey. She was over ninety when she died.

When the young plantation darkie is taken into the immediate service of the family, he is merely expected to be ornamental and amusing. He is handsome (or he would not be taken into the house retinue), he 's fuller than

he can hold of fun and often very sharp. He is encouraged to be impudent, in a respectful, affectionate fashion. He steals tit-bits from kitchen, from pantry, and dining-room, and his master and mistress laugh and wink at him, because they know he would not enjoy the goody half so well were it given to him.

All darkies give their children elaborate names, and any self-respecting black who has a simple surname swiftly exchanges it for the grandest he can find.

Except among the very poorest of the Southern darkies, the children have nothing to do, and they do it to perfection. They all sing and play the banjo, they make whistles out of green bark, and hammocks out of the ropey Florida moss. They are closely in touch with nature. They know all living things and all the blooming of forest and of field. They are at peace on earth and full of goodwill towards men. They fill the South with laughter and with song, with frolic and the joy of living, and relieve the tension of many a hard-put-to Southern existence.

CHAPTER II.

BRETON CHILDREN.

"We should see the spirits ringing
Round thee were the clouds away:
'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing
In the silent-seeming clay—
Singing! stars that seem the mutest go in music all the way.

"As the moths around a taper,
As the bees around a rose,
As the gnats around a vapour,
So the spirits group and close,
Round about a holy childhood as if drinking its repose."

YVONNE TRIQUET is a person of affairs. She is quite a mother to her parents, and to her brothers and sisters, who are far from few; she industriously shares the cares and the duties of their quaint Breton *ménage* with her hardworking mother; she vigorously directs and assists her father in his primitive farming; she energetically oversees and curbs the doings of her brother and sister children; she works from grey dawn to full candle-time, and she insists upon their working too; she is sincerely devout, and she makes them pray as often, if not as heartily, as she. Woe be to any brother or sister of Yvonne's that fails to fall upon its little knees and bow its picturesque head at any one of the wayside crosses, shrines, or Calvaries that thickly

YVONNE TRIQUET

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dot the Breton landscape everywhere; woe be to that sacrilegious baby if Yvonne be near.

Yvonne is a staunch, if not a very erudite, politician. She has "views" upon several subjects—views deep-rooted, if not finely philosophical. Above all, Yvonne is a Breton. There is only one way in which you could more offend her than by calling her French, and that would be by calling her German. This intense feeling of nationalism—of separate nationalism—of being a people from all other peoples (even from the French) apart, is vitally characteristic of the Bretons. Breton history and Breton individuality justify it; because of this it seems fit to glance at the children of Brittany quite by themselves. And so, before we turn to the fascinating little ones of France—France proper—let us try to catch a peep at the wee ones of Brittany, remembering that they are the children of a people as distinct as it is charming.

I have chosen Yvonne as the subject of this little sketch because she is so intensely and typically Breton. She is intensely alive; she is, perhaps, the chief moving power in the Triquet household; she has all the vim, the force of character, that seem to have fallen like a mantle of royal ermine from the white shoulders of the Queen-Duchess Anne of Brittany on to the brown shoulders of all feminine Breton peasantry.

Somehow I always think of Anne of Brittany when I see one of her countrywomen—young or old, rich or poor. Certainly Breton girls are worlds more interesting than Breton boys. And, foolish as I know the fancy to be, I cannot help feeling, as I look upon the strong, able women and girls of Brittany, that they have *en masse*

inherited much of the splendid ability and force of character that made the Duchess Anne one of the world's few never-to-be-forgotten women.

Anne of Brittany wrote Latin easily (and it was accomplished Latin), as did most of the highly-born women of her time. Yvonne Triquet is as ignorant of Latin as Jeanne d'Arc was of the alphabet, as ignorant of Girton and things Girtonesque as Jeanne and Anne. But there are some things, several things, which Yvonne knows with thoroughness—a thoroughness that reminds us of Anne's queenliness and womanliness, of Jeanne's self-denying patriotism; a thoroughness that ought in Girton to be synonymous with scholarliness. For to know one thing thoroughly is, I venture to take it, to be scholarly in one direction at least. Yvonne is a past-mistress of cabbage soup. She understands the culture and the marketableness of red clover with a nice and unchallengeable exactness that, in spite of her Breton self, proclaims her a countrywoman of Pasteur's; she is as confident an authority on Breton headgear as ever was M. Worth on chiffons; she could, without effort, pass a rigid examination on Breton history; she is a living, breathing, lovely encyclopedia of Breton legends and superstitions.

Yvonne is not daintily housed, but she is adequately and characteristically housed. She lives in a house which is, despite its dearth of luxury, almost as engaging as herself. It is a long, straight, shallow house, divided latitudinally into eight rooms, all of equal size. Six of the eight rooms are appropriated by the chief live-stock and implements of peasant Triquet's little farm. In one of the two rooms which the family

Triquet makes bold to reserve for itself that family lives. There they eat, and cook, and—to be brief—do all they must do indoors. The parents Triquet and two or three of the babies Triquet sleep there. The overflow of other babies and Yvonne sleep in the other family room, and there are kept all the Triquet festival clothes.

Let us look into the most used of these two rooms. When we have seen it we have seen the dwelling-room of nine-tenths of Brittany's peasantry. Opposite the door—the large front door—is the large fire-place, about which is arranged a very limited and immaculately clean *batterie de cuisine.* Near the fire-place, and well riveted to the wall, is the huge *lit clos.* That vast bedstead is the most valued of the Triquet possessions. It is of oak, and richly carved. Panels shut it in—panels so well waxed that they slide without the least hint of sound, and so shiny that they answer perfectly as the family mirror. Each panel has some carefully executed bit of pictorial carving, and on each is cut the sacred monogram I.H.S.

There is a thick paliasse upon the bed. There are two mattresses and a *cosette de plume,* compared to which the thickest of English feather beds or Teutonic eider-downs is a thick wafer. The bed linen is as coarse and clean as coarse and clean can be.

At the end of the *lit clos* is a really valuable old chest of carved oak. On it many generations of Triquets have sat. By means of it many generations of Triquets have climbed into that *lit clos,* which (as are all self-respecting Breton beds) is so high that only an athlete, and one well in training, could, unaided, scramble into it from the floor.

In it—in the chest—are the bridal garments of Triquet *mère et père*, and such other purple and fine linen as is not stored in the next room.

On the other side of the great chimney is a two-shelved cupboard, in which Yvonne's two eldest brothers sleep. There are two benches in the room — unpainted, but highly polished—and in the centre is the all-important table.

It was made I dare not say how many years ago, but it is white—snow white—with a rigorous cleanliness which age itself has no more darkened than it has withered the strong, tense fibre of the hard wood. Through its highly polished surface are hollowed a round dozen of little wells. In them is placed the *potage de choux*, which is the beginning and the end of almost all Triquet meals. Yvonne and Yvonne's mother scour and scour again their pots and pans, but they wash no dishes. The clumsiest of the Triquet boys never breaks a plate—there are none to break.

There are strong jugs to drink from, but what a Triquet eats he eats from his table-well, or from his own well-washed hands. Above the table hang the bread basket and the spoon rack. They are on pulleys, and, except at meal-times, are kept up at the ceiling. The basket is a great round thing, for your Breton will have none of the long, characteristic loaves of all other France. When the Triquets dine or sup the bread basket is lowered to an easy-reaching height, and each person breaks substantial chunks off the loaf as he requires them. If there is little variety in the Triquet *menu*, there is as little stint. Of what there is the children may eat and drink, and welcome. But woe to the child who takes more than he can

A BRETON FAMILY

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swallow, who leaves a sup of cider, a spoonful of soup, a crumb of bread. For in Brittany, as everywhere else in economical France, to leave meat on your plate or wine in your cup is quite the very worst of bad manners. In the wooden rack there is for each Triquet a large wooden spoon. Yvonne never saw a fork until the ever-to-be-remembered day when she dined with the curé's housekeeper—dined off white bread and *ragôut* of beef and carrots.

From the faggots of hazel and the cross poles of the ceiling hang inconceivably many things. That ceiling is the family larder. Suspended from it are festoons of onions, horseshoes, lard, candles, pork, bags of meat, and bunches of herbs. There is no carpet upon the floor of beaten earth. But on great occasions a rug is spread, a rug almost as large as the floor. Yvonne helped her mother to make it. Her uncle, who keeps an inn in the nearest town, gave them the coffee sacks, which they sewed together. Over all they embroidered a pretty running pattern of *fleu-de-lys*, and clovers; and *voila!* behold the Triquet carpet! There are three pictures upon the walls, as inartistic of execution as they are sacred of subject. And on the sill of the room's one small window stands a gay pot of bravely blossoming flowers. Such is Yvonne's home. Nine-year-old Yvonne is quite a pretty little creature, but her energy and her ability impress you far more than her good looks.

As I have said, she is indefatigably industrious. She often cooks the family dinner. Perhaps some *gourmet* reader would be glad to have Yvonne's receipt for *potage de choux*. Pour a quart of boiling water upon a quart of well-grown cabbage, add a small spoonful of pepper, and

a more generous one of salt. Salt is plentiful and cheap in Brittany, and the Bretons, who love it, call it "poor man's sugar." If you have a spare onion or a cupful of rice, so much the better; throw it in, and you will have a feast. Serve boiling hot, and eat at once.

Yvonne is an expert knitter, as is every Bretonne. I believe she could knit in her sleep. I have seen her knit a race with her mother when both were blindfolded.

Almost every Breton family keeps bees. Many of the small country homes are veritable bee farms. The majority of these peculiar peasants regard their bees with a strange but real affection, and a hive of bees is often the favourite or only toy of a Breton child. The Bretons learn, almost from their babyhood, to handle their queer pets deftly and with impunity. I have often seen Tugdual Gurret—a little ten-year-old peasant friend of mine—go to the hives, emit a soft, slow sound, half whistle, half crone, and in a few moments become almost covered with bees. Hundreds and hundreds of bees came rushing at his call, and alighted upon the ribbons of his hat, the sash at his waist, and on his hands, his face, and, yes, on his lips too. Not the worst-tempered bee of them all ever stung him, but they would undoubtedly have wrought terrible havoc and torture upon the skin of any rash stranger who had ventured to introduce him or herself to their acquaintance.

In many parts of Brittany the bees are thought to share in the joys and the sorrows of the families who own them. Their hives are wrapped in red cloth when there is a marriage in the house, in black when there is a death. This is—or until very recently was—still done in Wales. The Bretons believe that the bees were sent from heaven

to earth after the fall of Adam, and that they brought a blessing with them, a blessing that has followed them ever since—follows them still. And because of this, the devout Bretons make from beeswax the tapers destined to light the holy altars.

Very few Breton children are ever taught what we commonly understand to be a trade. That sort of thing is almost confined to the French colony in Brittany. Primitive farming both boys and girls learn; both know how to row and fish. Almost all the girls are taught dairy work. All can knit and spin, and many of them are skilful cutters, cookers, packers, etc., of the silver sardines which their fathers and brothers catch.

Every Breton child believes in witchcraft, in charms, and in the most grotesque antidotes and spells. The Bretons are both superstitious and leech-like in the tenacity of their conservatism. They cling most determinedly to their old religious customs and superstitious habits. It was only two centuries ago that paganism was really banished from Brittany; and to-day the Christianity of the Bretons is a strangely interesting thing of threads and patches, a grotesque ethnological patchwork of ancient creeds and paganistic rites. Voltaire said that we—we English—had a hundred creeds and only one sauce. The Bretons are a people with one soup (cabbage soup, upon which they largely live) and ten thousand heathenish and impossible beliefs. Some of the capers which the Breton children solemnly go through on certain saints' days and at the "pardons" would put a South Sea Islander to the blush. I know of no nation more essentially grotesque and barbarous in its religious antics than are, at times, some of the good folk of Christian Brittany. Their

observances in connection with the dead and the New Year are ultra peculiar, and in all the odd doings of the parents and their ancestors the children are gravely trained and share.

Oyster-fishing is, among the Bretons, almost a hereditary craft. The boys who are taught oyster culture and fishing are the descendants of long generations of oystermen. Almost as soon as they can sit up they are taken out dredging by their fisher fathers, and are gradually taught all that pertains to the fishing and to the *pensionnates des hûitres*, as the Bretons call their oyster-beds. Such beds are often several miles long. They are always beautifully well made and scrupulously cared for.

Oyster and other shells are often the playthings of the small Bretons in the oysterman community. Very ingenious are many of the brown-fingered little boys and girls. Wonderful things they fashion out of the bivalves' shells, out of the bones of big fish, and out of seaweed. Houses, carts, and dolls are but a few of the toys I distinctly recall which were made, I know, by the busy unaided children of a fishing hamlet on the Breton coast. It was in September that I was there, and the busy life of the hardworking fisher-folk was in full flare. Often I have seen two hundred or more of the trim oyster-boats set sail. Back they all come merrily with the returning tide. Each boat has its heavy harvest of oysters reaped by the drag nets; nor is that all. On the boat's bottom are heaped silver hills of scale fish. Each fisherman knows which part of the *pensionnat* is his own particular plot; for the owner of each boat buys or rents one of the compartments into which the huge bed is divided. As the pretty boats pass over the *pensionnat* each fisherman, or

band of fishermen, drops his catch of oysters into his own plot, and with his lightened craft hastens to shore to despatch his more delicate "yield" of scale fish to the most remunerative markets. On the sandy shore the strong-armed women wait alert to aid in dragging the heavy boats and sort and pack the slippery spoil. Children toddle, and run here and there and everywhere, poking and digging in the sand for crabs and small eels. They wade in waist-deep, in their young, eager, industrious fashion. Semi-occasionally they capture some stray oyster, or a baby lobster. Then the infant fisherman indulges in a dramatic little French rapture, and crosses himself and murmurs a devout *remercier* to the patron saint of all Brittany's fisher-folk.

As I have said, the Bretons are rarely or never craftsmen. A few—a very few—are able to make their own oyster nets, and every boy among the oyster folk knows how to repair and care for these nets, which are the all-important impedimenta of the Breton oystermen. The nets are rather worth describing, I think; they are almost unique.

Only in Jersey and Brittany have I seen oysters dragged for with, and caught in, nets. These drag-nets are made of many little rings of iron; they are deep, bag-shaped, and hang on strong chains.

The Breton baby, when indoors, spends most of his time in a high, swinging cradle that is suspended from the roof of the living room of its peasant home. The cradle hangs from one of the uncovered cross-beams of the ceiling. The French call such cradles *bercelonnettes* (*Anglice*—bassinets), but the Bretons call them *brausels*. They have been most aptly called "hanging babe-

baskets," and just such baskets often hang beneath the huge cabriolets of Southern Italy.

The Bretons are not unskilful with their hands. Every boy can carve quickly and smoothly the wooden spoons out of which they all eat, and the wooden sabots which they all wear upon their feet.

The Bretons are great lovers of lace, and many a little peasant maiden, who lives upon no daintier fare than *galettes* and *potage de choux*, has at least one bit of real old lace treasured against her wedding-day. Almost every Breton girl can embroider exactly, nicely, and effectively.

All the girls are taught something of agriculture, and most of them are trained to go to market, and to there sell and buy and barter to the best advantage. They are born financiers, and in buying and selling greatly excel their brothers.

They are a careful people, the Bretons, and the children of both sexes are trained to look about them as they walk, and seize upon any useful, ownerless thing they come upon by chance, such as a bunch of wild blackberries or a tuft of feathers that may help to stuff the family bed.

In and near those Breton towns where Europeans most do congregate, many of the peasant children are taught—systematically trained—to beg. I borrow a description for the unexaggeratedness of which I can vouch: "As we leave Dinan by diligence, with much cracking of whips and jingling of bells, through a long, straggling suburb, the peasants stare at us from out their dark dwellings; we stop at wayside inns—unnecessarily it would seem—and are surrounded by beggars of all ages and sizes. Here

a little child comes suddenly to earth at the sound of wheels, and peers from the darkness of her home underground with the brightness and vivacity of a weasel; her black eyes glisten with astonishment and with the instinct of animal nature scenting food; she transforms herself in an instant from buoyant youth and almost cherub-like beauty to a cringing, whining mendicant. *Quelque chose, quelque chose pour l'amour de Dieu*, in good clear French, nearly all the words that her parents would have her learn, in the intervals of playing and road scraping—the latter her only serious business in life. But the schoolmaster is abroad in Brittany; the edict has gone forth that henceforth every child of France shall learn the French tongue; and this little creature will be taught and trained and civilised into ways that her parents never knew."

The Breton girls carry heavy and awkward loads upon their heads almost as easily and gracefully as do the Arab and Zulu girls. It is the commonest of sights to see a very wee maiden tripping quickly along with a pail of milk or jug of wine upon her white-capped head. She sings gaily as she briskly goes on, and as she sings she knits. They are always knitting, those Breton girls and women. I have seen them knit as they knelt at prayer. I have seen them knit as they sat in the sun and dozed.

They dance, do the children of Brittany. The *ronde* is a national institution—almost a national sacrament—and every boy and girl is taught to bear its part bravely in the Breton round dance, without which no *fête* is complete. Indeed, whenever and wherever a score or more of Bretons are pleasantly gathered together, and have no immediate duties, ten to one they break into their national dance. I have seen them dance at weddings and

at christenings; have seen them dance on the seashore, in old barns, in a ruined castle, in the fields, and on the streets; at noontide and at dark, in the moonlight and by candle-light.

When there is music—and there always is, except at the most impromptu affairs, and often even then—the musicians are usually two. One plays a flageolet and the other blows upon a *biniou*. The *biniou* is *par excellence* the Breton musical instrument. It is an antique Armorican bagpipe, and is probably the prototype of Scotland's bagpipes. The harp was once as much the national instrument of Scotland as of Ireland. The bagpipe was introduced into Scotland—some say from Brittany, some say by Marie Stuart, but certainly from France. It greatly pleased the Scots, who, discarding their old harp, made it their national instrument.

The Bretons dance with animation, exactness, and a rude picturesqueness that might almost pass for grace. They keep capital time; they dance many figures. And all this the children are carefully taught. They are prepared for the *fête*-day *ronde* as carefully as they are prepared for their confirmation. To fail or come badly off in either would be a bitter and a public disgrace. Dance they ever so many figures, they always dance back to the *ronde*—an "all hands round" that is really pretty to watch as they circle gravely hand-in-hand, wooden sabots, white caps, red sashes, ribboned and bebuckled hats and all. The gravity of manner, and the downward look of the women in certain figures, as they advance and retire with hands down, give a peculiar quaintness to the *gavotte*, which, apparently rollicking and unrestrained, is, in fact, orderly and regular in every

SINCERELY DEVOUT

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movement. The circular motion of the dancers, now revolving in several circles, now in one grand *ronde*, is traced by M. Emile Souvestre, and other writers, to Druidic origin and the movements of the stars. The *gavotte* is a very characteristic example of the Breton *ronde*.

All Breton children love flowers and love to wear them. I have seen a small thing of three put down her load of twigs to gather and tuck into her belt a handful of the yellow sea-poppies, and the little white-belled convolvulus, which are the only flowers that grow in some bleak parts of Brittany.

Every Breton child is trained to "give to God," to lay its little mite at the shrine of some saint. Perhaps this is most especially true of the children of the fisher folks. The Breton fisher people, perhaps because their lives are lives of constant and vivid peril, have always clung more closely to their religious beliefs and superstitions, and been more scrupulous and conscientious in their religious and superstitious observances, than other Bretons. On, and in, many a Breton church are rude carvings of ships, nets, or fish. Such a carving proclaims the church built with the thankofferings of the fisher folk. Very many of the fishing-boats never put to sea without a net called *le filét saint*, a net the "take" of which is sacredly kept for the revenue of the Church. This is a very ancient custom. It was even then an ancient custom, when in the sixteenth century a church at Dunkirk, which the French had burned, was rebuilt entirely by a contribution called *le filét saint*.

Would that I might write on about these little ones. But I may not. All that I would say about their games,

the miraculous wells into which their mothers dip them, their marvellous superstitions—all that and much more must go unsaid. Two things, two pretty little things, I must just mention.

The young Moor, when he has accomplished his pilgrimage to Mecca, may wear a green turban. When a Breton has made a pilgrimage he fastens in his hat an *epinglette* (a tuft of blue or scarlet worsted), bought at the scene of the "pardon," or the bourne of his devout journey.

No Breton boy will stone or harm a robin redbreast; for he believes that all the red-breasted robins are descended from one which, with its beak, plucked from the brow of Christ, and from His crown, a thorn.

CHAPTER III.

BROWN BURMESE BABIES.

"O child! O new-born denizen
Of life's great city! on thy head
The glory of the morn is shed,
Like a celestial benison!
Here at the portal thou dost stand,
And with thy little hand
Thou openest the mysterious gate
Into the Future's undiscovered land—
I see its valves expand,
As at the touch of Fate!"

IN looking through my memories and my photographs, I linger with peculiar pleasure over my pictures and my memories of Burmah; not because of the ultra-picturesqueness of Burmah and the Burmans, not because of the quaintness of Burmese customs and the weirdness of Burmese superstitions, but because, of all the peoples I know, I know of none other in which family relationships are built upon so sound, so sure, so sensible a foundation as they are among the Burmese, or with whom they work so smoothly and so well.

Polygamy is theoretically permissible in Burmah, but is in fact almost non-existent. The position of woman is almost ideal in Burmah. Man respects woman there, and so is able to respect himself. Woman respects man, which enables her to respect herself. Respecting each other and themselves, it follows, as a matter of course, that man and

woman respect, consider, and love their children. Happy that people who respects the rights of its little children—thrice happy, even though its king be dethroned and banished and its regalia for ever lost! The relation of sex to sex, and, consequently, the relation of parent to child, are in Burmah upon a basis of utter simplicity, purity, justice, and sense. The children honour their fathers and their mothers; and the parents anger not their children. They are very chummy with their parents, are the brown Burmese babies. They are born into an atmosphere of love, of tolerance, of good nature, and they love and try to please, no more thinking of cut-and-dried obedience and of rough "must" than they think of their plump little diaphragms when they toss and crouch among the sweet-scented grass and breathe in rhythmically the perfumed, clean, wholesome air.

Burmese marriages are usually "love matches," and Burmese babies almost always come "welcomed and desired into life."

Three important events follow rapidly upon Baby's birth: his parents' friends are invited to a theatrical performance, his horoscope is written, and he is named.

The Burmese are far and away the most tireless actors and spectators of acting in the world. A few years ago it was quite true that there was scarcely a man in Burmah who had not at some time been an actor. This is modified somewhat now, as most things Burmese are, by European supremacy, but it is still largely true. In Burmah every event of personal or social importance is, if possible, celebrated by a play or Zat Poay. When Baby is born a Zat Poay is given. When he enters a *kyoung* there is a Zat Poay. When he comes out, another Zat Poay.

BURMESE MOTHER, CHILD, AND NURSE

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When he is tattooed, again a Zat Poay. When a girl's ears are bored, a Zat Poay. Marriage, divorce, and death are incomplete, not in good form, and lacking in decent observance, unless marked by a Zat Poay. A race is celebrated by a play, so is the dedication of a pagoda. The theatre is the national recreation, the national pick-me-up of Burmah. The Burmese drama is full of interest, both in its literature and in its performance. But any attempt at a description of it that did not stretch to some pages would be inadequate to worthlessness.

When Baby is expected a crude cradle is fashioned out of an old basket, if one be handy; if not, it is quickly woven of creeping canes, pliant bamboos, and coarse, tough, fibrous leaves. A bit of gay blanket, a soft heap of old but bright-hued clothes answer as Baby's eider-down. Ropes or strong vines suspend the cradle from the roof. It hangs from the centre of the ceiling, and swings so low that the elder children can easily sway it, or the grown-ups rock it without quite ceasing their usual work. Here Baby takes his first sleep and many more. Many a pretty lullaby is crooned to the small, dimpled, brown potentate as his energetic little mother bustles to and fro making red rice cakes, or preparing the evening meal of fruit, of pickled tea, of fish and curry. Here is a rough translation of one of the commonest Burmese cradle-songs. Does not it remind you of a nursery ditty that your mother used to sing? It does me.

"Sweet my babe, your father's coming,
Rest and hear the songs I'm humming,
He will come and gently tend you,
Rock your cot, and safe defend you."

And the Burmese father will indeed give his child gentle

tending. The men of Mongoloid stock make capital nurses. I knew a Chinese mandarin who was never so proud as when nursing his twin girls, and I knew a Siamese noble who sat beside his sick child's bed through the nights of three anxious weeks.

When Baby—our Burmese baby—is a fortnight old he is named. The astrologer, an important functionary among the Burmese, who mingle Buddhism and rank superstition in the deftest way, selects or divines an auspicious day. Invitations accompanied with packets of *hlapét* or pickled tea are sent far and wide, and friends and relatives are bidden to a feast and Zat Poay. On the day of the naming, Baby's head is washed for the first time, and his name is chosen and proclaimed. But the limits of the choice are determined by the day of the week upon which he was born. Burmese custom divides the letters of the alphabet among the days of the week, and a child born on Monday must receive a name initiated by one of the letters belonging to that day.

"Ka, kha, ga, gha, nga, Taninla,
Sa, hsa, za, zha, nya, Ainga,
Ta, tha, da, dha, na, Sanay,"

is the beginning of a jingle which every Burmese child learns, as you and I learned "Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November." A child born on Taninla (Monday) must have a name beginning with K, G, or N, and when he is old enough to go to the pagodas, the nature of the offering he carries, or rather its shape, is determined by the day of his birth. Each day of the week is under the protection, or subject to the fury, of some animal. The tiger rules Monday, and a Burman

born on Monday will offer to Gautauma a candle shaped like a tiger and fashioned of yellow or of scarlet wax. Tuesday belongs to the king of beasts; Wednesday is the tusked elephant's; Thursday is sacred to the rat; and Friday to the guinea-pig. The dragon dominates Saturday, and Sunday is dedicated to a fabulous creature—half bird, half beast.

Very early in life the little Burman is tattooed; animals, charms, and conventional arrangements of dots are pricked one by one into the soft brown skin. Often a round spot is shaven on quite the top of the head, and something very elaborate is perpetrated there in brilliant red pigment. The last and formal or ceremonial tattooing usually is celebrated late in boyhood. The operation is very painful, and often opium is used to dull the senses. But, even so, the after-suffering is intense; and I have often wondered at the stoicism of the Burmese boys, for they come of a sensibly self-indulgent and ease-loving race. I suppose it's the strain of Mongolian blood. A properly tattooed Burman is pictorially allegorical from the belt to the knee.

About the time the boy becomes a living picture-book his sister's ears are bored. This is the girl's "presentation"—her *entrée* into society and womanhood. She does not lengthen her dress, because her dress has always been long, to tripping length; but she now learns to arrange her hair more carefully, to powder her face, to move with a peculiar swaying motion, supposed to be like the tilting of a head-heavy flower in the breeze, and to do great havoc among the hearts of the Burmese men. Now she must practise deportment, and no longer ramble here and there at her own sweet will, as free as the green and

purple parrots she chases among the bamboo forests and the groves of flowering frangipanis. She is twelve or thirteen now, and soon may hope to be a wife and mother. From this day until the near day of her betrothal she must be chaperoned. There is a feast, of course; and, much more of course, a play. The signal for the ear-piercing is given by the astrologer. The little maid, rather frightened, but very interested, is held firmly down, and the attendant musicians play briskly while a gold or silver needle is swiftly run through the tiny yellow ear; for, unlike her brother, the girl is not intended to be a stoic. If anything could excuse the odious custom of ear-piercing (which I think nothing can) it would be the beauty of the dainty ear-jewels of the Burmese women.

Every Burmese child learns to dance, and smokes by instinct.

The merest toddlers are devoted to their cigars. It is an hourly sight to see the dimpled, rosy mouth of an almost baby pressed determinedly about "a whacking big cheroot." Boys and girls learn the use of the fan and the significance of the umbrella. They feast on food hot with salt and capsicum, and on Burmah's wonderful fruit-plenty—a plenty crowded with pines and papayas, with critrons and custard apples, with green oranges and golden mangoes.

The boys are sent to the monasteries to school. The Burmese alphabet is so remarkable that a dull boy is often a year learning it. The lazy boys are punished by being obliged to parade up and down carrying the industrious boys upon their backs. As in most Oriental schools, the pupils study aloud.

Every Burmese boy must spend some time as a novice

A BURMESE PRINCESS

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to the *poungyis*, or priests, who live in the *kyoungs* or monasteries. The initiation ceremonial and the monastery *régime* are most interesting.

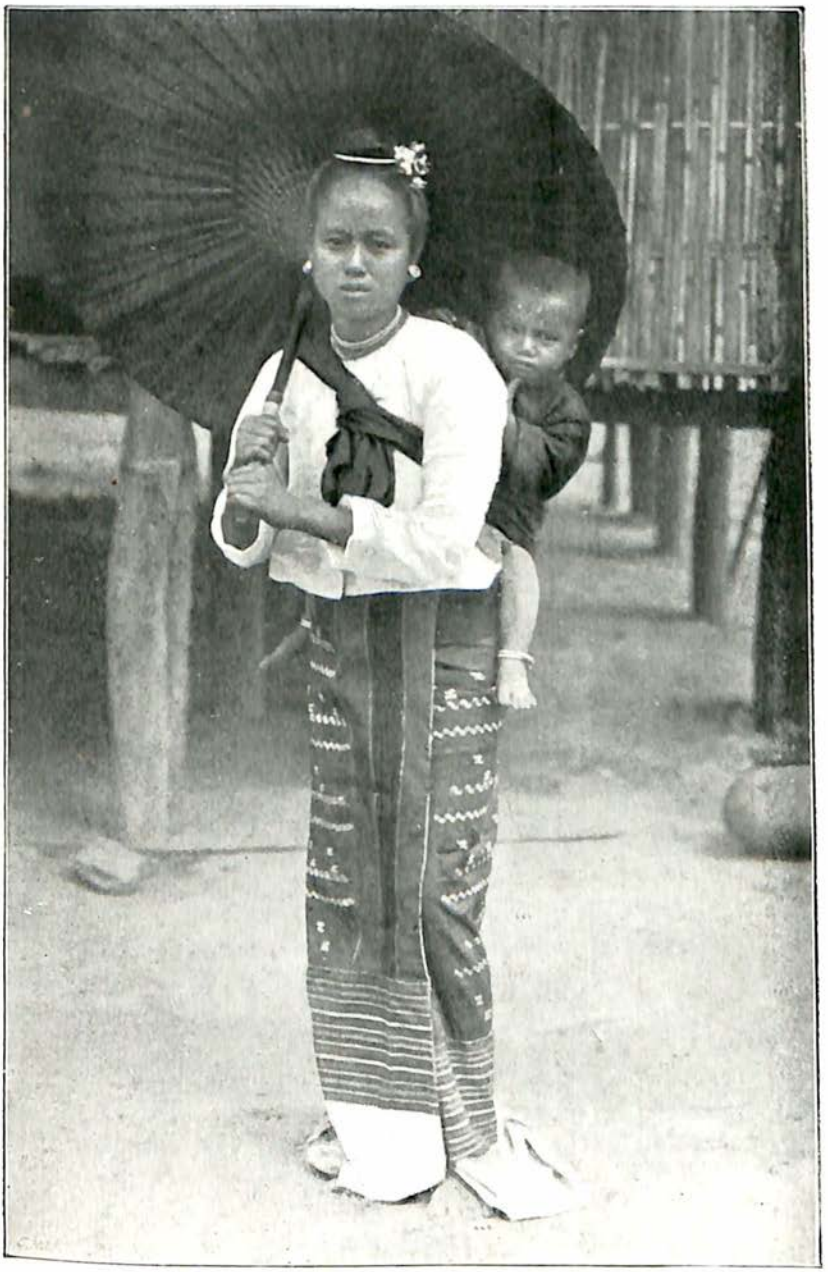
Burmese children are devoted to puppet shows and to football. They are happy in living in a land of gorgeous panorama, of stimulating architecture, of natural plenty, and perpetual picture. They are happier in dwelling in a land in which there is little wealth and no pinching poverty. They are happiest in being the children of a happily tempered race—a race whose first law of life is love.

One recent October night I drove through the London drizzle with a fair-haired, hazel-eyed English boy, and left him in his cheerful, wholesome school-home. As I drove back the drizzle had changed to rain. Feeling just a bit lonelier than I had ever felt before, I leaned back in the hansom and closed my eyes; they were aching a little, and seemed to have caught something of London's autumnal twilight mist. I pulled my foolish mother-self together, and comforted me with the welcome fact that more of the missing would be done by me than by the little fellow who would have football and the division of all Gaul into three parts, for the occupations of his next three months, old friends for masters, and a big houseful of hearty, rollicking English boys for mates. Suddenly I saw a picture—a memory-printed photograph. It was the picture of a boys' boarding-school, and I smiled at the absurd contrast between it and the boys' boarding-school from which I had just come.

The school from which I was driving is a square, ivy-hung, homelike place. A housemaid, black of frock, white of cap, and nice of face, opens the door. The well-groomed

garden has a delightful touch of humanity, for a boy's cap lies beside a bed of autumn flowers, and beneath a rose tree is the dropped and rather dirty handkerchief of a very careless, but very lovable little boy. I know that handkerchief; I stitched the three red initials into its corner. From the playground behind the house comes a *mêlée* of good and boisterous sounds. The sharp, enthusiastic thud of boys' boots kicking big footballs mingles with the wholesomest, most admirable of all earth's sounds —the vocal noises of a school of nice English boys at full play.

The boys' school that memory recalled is different. It is painted the most brilliant of earthly reds; it is lacquered to the supreme of earthly polish; it is positively wanton with bizarre gold toppings. Birds nest here and there in its queer, fantastic roofs; and gay Burmese flowers grow in its mouldering niches and hang down its scarlet walls, looking among their tender leaves for all the world like blue and purple butterflies, enmeshed in a pale green net. A fat, yellow-clad Buddhist priest sits in the *kyoung* doorway. He is smoking an enormous cheroot. Beside him stands Po Thin — Po Thin as I first saw him. Po Thin wears a gaily striped *potsoe*, a generously flowered jacket, and a pink silk *goung boung* or headkerchief. He is holding a big paper umbrella over the monk's head, for the sun is very hot. On the doorway sill stands a big brass bowl, heaped with pickled tea, and rice, and nauseous-looking yellow cakes. It is the monk's begging-bowl. For half the day he has borne it up and down the village street, asking for nothing, but accepting any and every scrap of food bestowed upon him by the Burmese devout.



MOTHER AND CHILD

(MIDDLE-CLASS)

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The *poungyi* is in fine good humour, and Po Thin is glad; for a Burmese schoolboy is the servant as well as the pupil of the teacher-priest to whom he is attached, and servants are apt to suffer in Burmah, as in Britain, when their master is in a sour mood. The fat priest is placid, and not over-exacting, as he sits smoking in the fierce sunshine. Not only is the begging-bowl full and heaped, but it holds an unusual proportion of *hlapét*, or pickled tea, and Po Thin's master doats and doats upon *hlapét*.

By the way, *hlapét* is not as a rule made of tea, though it is always spoken of as pickled "tea." It is more often made from the leaves of the *Elaedendron persicum* plant.

The *kyoungs*, or monasteries, are the schools of Burmah. Until very recently every Burmese boy, upon reaching his eighth birthday, was put into a *kyoung*, and remained there for some time, learning to read and write and waiting reverently upon the *poungyis*, or priests. The word *poungyi* means "great glory." The boy-pupil is a novice of the monastery, and to all intents and purposes a young priest. In these days his novitiate is often very brief—almost nominal. The priests themselves may, and do, throw off their yellow robes and return to the world whenever they choose. Almost every Burman is at some period of his or her life a professional actor. Almost every Burmese man enters the priesthood for a longer or shorter time. I am referring to grown men, and not to the enforced novitiate of the boys' schooldays.

In Burmah, as in England, boys occasionally regard school as a beastly "bore," and education as all "nonsense." Po Thin was a contented little fellow when I knew him, both at home and at school. He was a popular person,

too, both with his teachers and mates. Burmese schoolboys are even more given to begging for "half-holidays," and whole ones too, than are English boys, and they are wonderfully successful in getting them. Let me tell you all about it—tell for the benefit of schoolboy readers, if I am happy enough to have such. There is one, I know. Po Thin is very apt to be the spokesman when the boys combine to secure any privilege. They like him, and the *poungyis* like him, and he has very eloquent eyes, and so stands a rather good chance of having his request granted. He has not, however, an over-eloquent tongue. The Burmese are almost never garrulous. I have heard a wrinkled old yellow crone scold by the unbroken hour, but I can recall no other instance of Burmese excessive talkativeness.

When Po Thin has a favour to ask he girds his *potsoe* about him as tightly as he and it will bear; that is a mark of respect, to go before the *poungyi* tensely girt. When he has reached the man of learning, of humility, and of holiness, the boy squats down upon his heels and waits. The Burmese always sit so when in the presence of a superior; and they always sit so when they have a favour to ask, even of an equal. When Po Thin has attracted the priest's attention he puts his little hands together and bows his pink-wrapped head slowly to the ground. Then he addresses his master in "honorific" language, omitting no item of elaborate Burmese courtesy. He makes many and extreme compliments, and makes them at some length. Then he takes breath, and blurts out in brief, embarrassed boy-fashion what it is he wants. He gets it, as a rule, and almost shouts out his brief and awkward, but hearty, word of thanks, and bounds up and off—pink

A BURMESE PRINCESS IN HER STATE ROBES

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turban, striped skirt, flowered jacket, and all—to tell the other boys.

I have said that Po Thin was not talkative, nor was he. Yet he was called so—called so because he was born on a Friday.

The Burmese believe that a person's disposition is determined by, or accords with, the day of the week of his birth. The Monday-born are jealous. The Tuesday-born are strictly honest. Those born on Wednesday are quick of anger and quick to forgive and grow calm. Thursday's children are mild. Saturday's are quarrelsome. And all born on Sunday are supposed to be miserly, and are held so by the superstitious Burmese, even though they, the Sunday-born, be the veriest spendthrifts in the village, or the most generous and open-handed in the land.

In learning the name of an Oriental, with the peculiarities of whose nation we are unacquainted, we naturally wonder which is the surname and which the personal name. Po Thin has no surname. No Burman ever does have a surname. A Burman may have a very large family, each child bearing several names, and yet no child will have even one name in common with either father or mother. Almost all the Burmans, and especially the men, change their names repeatedly. Po Thin had a new name given him when he entered the *kyoung*. But I forget it, and he will drop it when he comes out.

Po Thin plays football as well as any English boy I ever saw, and so do all his mates. Football is the great game in Burmah. Po Thin can dance too, and dance well. Everyone in Burmah can. But dancing is not part of the *kyoung* curriculum. Children learn it from their elders and

from each other. More often than not they seem to acquire it instinctively.

Po Thin had a slate given to him when he began his *kyoung* life. It was a rough affair, hacked rather than made out of coarse black wood, or of wood painted black. Several Burmese characters were written or painted on it in flaring white. They were the first letters of the Burmese alphabet—that alphabet so difficult that dull boys are often a year memorising it; Po Thin took quite three months, and Po Thin is the reverse of dull. The *poungyi* repeated these letters aloud to Po Thin several times, heard Po Thin repeat them after him, corrected the boy's mispronunciations, and then left him. For almost a week Po Thin's school hours were entirely devoted to shouting out those few letters, to shouting them as correctly as possible, but, above all, as loudly as possible. Clamour is the test of industry in almost all Oriental schools; it is superlatively so in the *kyoung* schools. Any boy who stops shouting is supposed to have stopped studying, and is sure to be immediately pounced upon by the *poungyi*, bamboo in hand.

When I spoke of the alphabet and its difficulties, I should perhaps have said the alphabet and its many and curious combinations. The two are never taught, or considered, apart; they are called the "great basket of learning."

Po Thin was never "thrashed" at school. Burmese boys are thrashed sometimes, but not often, and Po Thin did not often merit any kind of punishment. The first time that he was punished the form of punishment was so terrible, so degrading, and he was so bitterly ashamed, that he resolved there and then never to be naughty

again. The day was relentlessly hot, and "the great basket of learning" bored him; it was a thorn in the flesh, a heavy burden on his mental back. So he laid it down, and began playing with his pet snake—a graceful (as snakes go), bright-eyed little thing that had been sleeping contentedly enough all the morning in Po Thin's *potsoe*, but that was more than glad to get out into the sunshine and play about the boy's feet, crawl over his toes, and up his jacket. The fun between the boy and the snake was getting fast and furious when the *poungyi* spied it. Then there was an ado—far more of an ado than when Mary's little lamb made its world-famous appearance at Mary's little school! Po Thin was ordered to tuck his frisky little pet up in his *potsoe*. It was not turned out *à la* Mary's little lamb; that would have been a most un-Burmese proceeding. Po Thin was made to take Moung Thoung Bo (he always had hated Moung Thoung Bo) upon his—Po Thin's—back, and so march slowly up and down the schoolroom several times, to the great joy of the other boys and his own mortal distress.

Such is the fashionable form of *kyoung* punishment. The boys dread it intensely. They are proud, most of them, and all vainer than they are proud, and dread public ridicule even more than they dread the bamboo switch.

All Po Thin's text-books were religious, most of them were in the Pali language, of which he knew nothing, and which there was no intention to teach him.

There was no furniture in the *kyoung* schoolroom. The yellow-clad *poungyi* sat squat upon a low, mat-covered platform. The boys sat squat upon the bare floor in rows before him. The boys who have mastered the multitudinous contents of the "great basket" chant after the

teacher word for word, emphasis for emphasis, gesture for gesture, their lesson. The twenty or thirty boys crouching down on their knees, their little heads every now and then bowing down to the ground, over their hands, joined together in supplication; the yellow-robed monk, sitting cross-legged on a raised seat before them, repeating the clauses of the form of worship, which the childish voices instantly catch up, forms a scene not quickly forgotten.

CHAPTER IV.

ESKIMO CHILDREN.

"The north cannot undo them,
With a sleety whistle through them;
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

"In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time."

THEY are born in the snow; they are cradled in ice; the shrieking of the north wind is the only lullaby they hear. They live—most of them—in huts that are built of snow, and they go to sea, when the sea is not frozen, in boats of seal-skin and bone. They are clad in seal-skin and otter, and wear indescribably warm inner garments of birds' skins—birds' skins dressed with the feathers on.

The Eskimo babies are carried in their mothers' hoods in the greater part of the immense territory in which their tribes dwell. But in Labrador the babies are carried in the boots of their mothers. These boots have a long pointed flap in front, which is made for this purpose, and

which is very like a snug box, into which baby can be tightly and cosily squeezed.

"Doesn't his mother's skirt smother him?" His mother wears skirts so very divided that we really need not call them skirts at all; and she wears them well tucked into her boots.

The Eskimo children are born into the most peaceful, the most orderly, if not the most luxuriantly comfortable community on earth. The Eskimo have no magistrates; they have no laws; yet they maintain among themselves an ideal good order. Perhaps they find the fierce and constant war that they must needs wage against the elements too exhausting to admit of their voluntarily waging war among themselves. At all events, a quarrel among Eskimo is almost unknown, and when it does occur it never goes further than a difference of opinion, which the disputants settle by separating. If two members of an Eskimo family do not pull together comfortably they separate quietly and definitely. If two sections of an Eskimo tribe fall out one section moves a few miles away. That is the way in which every Eskimo quarrel terminates. Even the children play together peacefully, and never quarrel among themselves; doubtless because they never see aught that approaches quarrelsomeness among their elders. As soon as an Eskimo baby is born it is sewn into innumerable layers of warm clothing.

The Eskimo sing almost constantly when they are indoors, between the intervals of sleeping and eating. Perhaps it is one of the necessities of their enforced solitude. I only know one of their songs; it was taught me by a man that had been with one of the great exploring parties, and had gone much among the Eskimo. It

AN ESKIMO GIRL

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was rude, monotonous, and terribly sad. It was undeniably musical. "Amna Ayah, Amna Ayah," that was its verbal burden, and when I compare it with the folk-songs of the Chinese, and the national ditties of the Burmese, I am all but sure that the men are right who have concluded, on far more exact, scientific grounds than mine, that the Eskimo are Mongolian in their origin.

The Eskimo children are not indulged in a largely varied diet, but they are introduced to the family meals at a very tender age, and they are allowed to gorge themselves until they "can no more." The Eskimo have been called a race of gluttons. That is unfair. They are primitive, uncleanly, and, in a passive way, wild. But it is unfair to stigmatise as gluttony the necessary replenishment of their greatly depleted organisms. The waste of carbon entailed by daily Eskimo life, with its active exercise and constant exposure to severe temperature, is enormous. The conditions of Eskimo life are so hard that the children are forced, almost at babyhood, to join in the daily occupations of the adults. So it is not strange that we find them gorging themselves like their elders. They eat seal's flesh, walrus beef, and bear's flesh; sometimes raw, sometimes partly cooked. Rats do not altogether escape the family pot. They suck blubber. They devour all manner of eggs. The eggs of the eider duck are their favourite dainty. They eat birds and fish, and molluscs, when they can get them. They depend very largely for sustenance upon the Iceland moss. Indeed, to many of the Eskimo, Iceland moss is what macaroni and olives are to the Italians—what rice is to the Hindus. The Iceland moss contains a bitter quality that is nauseous to European palates, and, when used as a food, not a drug,

is very detrimental to health. But the Eskimo extract or neutralise this property. They chop the lichen into small bits, steep it for days in water, in which is quicklime or salt of tartar; then they dry it, powder it, mix it with the flour of the knot grass, and make it into cakes. Or, if they have reindeer's milk with which to eat it, they boil it.

The Eskimo children go to no school. They learn nothing approaching book-lore, save only the words of a few plaintive songs, and the superstitions of the *schaman*, who is the medicine-man, the priest, the conjurer of many of the Eskimo tribes. Quaintly enough, "*schaman*" is pronounced showman. And he is a showman indeed, and the children adore him or fear him exceedingly. He makes wind and rain, casts out evil spirits, and is both *medico* and father confessor to the tribe. In Greenland he is called "*angelok*." Angelokism and Schamanism are almost, if not quite, identical, and they comprise all the religion of which the Eskimo children of the far, far north ever hear. Of course, the Eskimo who have migrated down towards the northern edge of Anglo-Saxon and Norwegian civilisation have been modified in many ways. But I am not writing of them. I am writing of the Eskimo, who are now what they have been for centuries.

But if the Eskimo child goes to no school of the ordinary kind, it goes to the most thorough of all schools, and in the busy academy of industrious daily life it learns completely each of the few things that it is necessary for an Eskimo man or woman to know.

The boys learn to find the nests where the wild sea-birds lay their eggs. They learn to catch the eider-duck,

and to rob it of its soft, warm down. They learn to fish in many odd and efficacious ways. They learn to gather dry moss, to catch drift-wood, if any comes their way, and to extract blubber; these three things are their only fuels. They learn to make implements of peace and war, hewing them with stones out of stone. And they learn to wage war!—not with their fellow-men, but with the elements, and with the great sea-monsters, and the richly-furred animals, from whom they wrest food, fuel, raiment, and often the possibility of life itself. They learn to disguise themselves in inflated seal-skins until they deceive the very seals, and so are able to creep up quite close to these the most timid of all mammals. They learn to hunt the otter, the beaver, the sea-horse, and the ermine, the reindeer, the bear, and the wolf. They learn to spear the walrus and the whale. They learn to build canoes and wonderful snow huts. They learn to catch the wild north birds with hand-nets. They learn to build sledges with the tusks and bones of great animals, to fashion lamps and kettles of soapstone, and to inlay their oars with quaint devices of ivory-like bone and of walrus teeth. They learn to drive the long mad teams of Eskimo dogs, and, if they live in Labrador, they learn to ride the reindeer. The items of their daily lives are not perhaps many, for we can squeeze them into a page. But if we could pause to tell of any one of those few items all that we know, the telling would fill many pages with vivid interest; and yet we know comparatively little of the Eskimo. But they live so near Nature's cold north throne, they see so many wonders of which we cannot even dream, that they must always have for us a weird, strong fascination. They know the strange crawling trees that sprawl

meekly on the frozen earth because the bleak north winds are so fierce that they will let nothing stand before them, and so mighty that nothing can resist them. They live in the cold land of peace, where Nature has said, "Here let the billows stiffen and have rest." They know the marvel of ten thousand icebergs moored upon the black, frozen sea. They see the superlative splendour of the aurora borealis. They know the sun that for months never sets. They know the night that for more months never lifts.

The Eskimo girls learn to cook in a crude but adequate fashion; they learn to cure the skins of beasts and birds, and to fashion them into rude garments; they learn to tend the soapstone lamps, which are their only fires, and must not go out, and to keep them always well fed with hunks of blubber.

They are very happy and contented, are these children of the Far North. They have their games, too, and their toys. They have balls and bats made of walrus bones. They have reins of strips of hide, and they shriek and laugh as they rush across the frozen snow, playing horse. But they do not call it playing horse; they call it "playing dog," or "playing reindeer."

In speaking of these children of the Far North, Nansen says: "In Greenland the Eskimos fell in with Europeans. First it was our Norwegian forefathers of the olden times; them they gradually overcame. But we returned to the charge, this time bringing with us Christianity and the products of civilisation; then they succumbed, and are sinking lower and lower. The world passes on with a pitying shrug of the shoulders, and—*n'importe*."

As I turn the pages of my atlas, and overturn the

photographs in my delightfully plump portfolios, the joyousness of my work, the gladdest work of an impersonal kind I have ever done, receives now and again a sudden check, a paralysing chill, as I turn to the sun-tinted counterfeit of some stolen land and see the pictured faces of some sadly circumstanced, more sadly futured race, which is dying out gradually in quantity, and rapidly in quality, because a "civilisation" has been forced upon it for which it is as little fitted as is the jewelled throat of a South American humming-bird for an Elizabethan ruff.

No race has needed us less than the Eskimo race. No race has deteriorated more through contact with us, where the contact has been close and persistent. The deterioration of no other race is to be more deplored. The fading away of vivid racial customs into a grey cosmopolitan *modus vivendi* is nowhere else so great an ethnological loss.

Nansen, who writes with the impartial pen of the scientist, though he contrives at the same time to be entrancing to the reading public, says more, in many places, in the same strain as what I have quoted above. And Nansen is the last man in the world to lose his temper with his well-loved Scandinavians except under great logical pressure. And we may accept his testimony as final—he bears it distinctly and emphatically—that ere long (unless some international miracle befall) there will be no distinct race of Eskimo, and no distinctive Eskimo customs. And so it may sadden us a little to glance at the snow-bound, snow-born, snow-bred babies, remembering that they are of a race about to pass away. Poor little Eskimo!

They are born on the ice, they are pillowed on the snow, and they fight a hand-to-hand fight with Nature for every hour they live.

An Eskimo baby is born fair of skin, except for a dark, round spot, sometimes as small as a threepenny-piece, sometimes as large as a shilling. This dark circle (it looks like a bad black and blue mark) is always exactly on the small of the back. From this centre-head of colour the dark tint gradually spreads until the toddling Eskimo is as beautifully, and as completely, and as highly coloured as a well-smoked meerschaum pipe. This is said to be also true of the Japanese. I can vouch for its truth as far as three small Japanese whom I saw enter the fever which we call life. At least I can affirm that the little black spots were there at the babies' births, and I was told that they spread until they covered the little bodies.

When an Eskimo baby or child needs to be washed its mother proceeds to wash it precisely as Mrs. Tabby washes her basketful of furry babies. To be "plain and homely in my drift," she licks it tenderly with her tongue. A scholar who goes very much more in detail into Eskimo customs than I dare to do, adds, after a peculiarly salacious bit of information, these trenchant words: "If any should be offended by these peculiarities in the manners and customs of the Greenlanders, they ought to reflect that their own forefathers, not so many generations ago, conducted themselves not so very differently. Let them read the accounts of the domestic life of the Teutonic peoples some centuries ago, and they will learn many things that will surprise them." I commend this writer's wisdom to any reader who objects to looking at naked piano legs, and will "a plain un-

varnished tale deliver" about the Eskimo, "extenuating nothing, and setting down naught in malice."

Among many Eskimo tribes clothing is quite dispensed with indoors by young and old, and in almost every tribe the children go naked at home, and are swathed in the greatest possible quantity of clothing when abroad. Men, women, and children dress very much alike. They all wear trousers well tucked into their boots; they all wear garments fashioned of fur and skin. They are very fond of ornament, and, when it is possible, load themselves with cheap jewellery, and embellish their clothes with embroidery, which is often as handsome as it is elaborate. Among the more highly civilised tribes — self-civilised tribes, I mean—the girls are taught to sew and to embroider as soon as they can guide a needle. They learn to embroider with great accuracy, and will carry an intricate design over yards of stuff—without pattern or tracery—with no guide but the eye, and one inch of the finished work will deviate scarcely at all from another.

As I have said, an Eskimo baby is carried in its mother's *amaut*, a hood hanging on the woman's shoulder. A child who does not walk, or who is sickly, or little enough to get into mischief, is carried in its mother's or its elder sister's *amaut* all day long—no matter what work the woman does or where she goes—and is only taken out to be fed. In some tribes, as among the Laplanders, for instance, a cradle of skin or of fur hangs from the roof of the hut, and in that bag-like cradle Baby passes most of his time. Both *amaut* and cradle are always lined with seal-skin, reindeer-skin, or some other soft skin, and with the hairy side towards the occupant. Who could wish for a snugger, warmer nest?

Some Eskimo never cut their hair or that of their children. If a child's hair is once cut it must be kept cut always. This is usually done with the jawbone of a shark, as the Eskimo, who is superstitious if anything, thinks it most unlucky if the hair is even touched by metal. A child whose hair is cut must clip off the tips of the tail and the ears of every puppy it owns, and all through life every litter of a dog it owns must at once be shorn of tail and shaven of ear. One glance at an Eskimo dog will tell you whether its master is a long-haired or a short-haired man.

In parts of Greenland the women wear different coloured ribbons in their hair to denote whether they are unmarried, wedded, or widowed, chaste or unchaste. A maiden binds her hair with red; a wife wears blue, a widow wears black. If a widow wishes to remarry she wears black and red; if she is old and determined under no circumstances to marry again, her ribbon is white. An unmarried girl or a widow who becomes a mother must wear a band of green upon her brow; but this is so highly regarded that many women assume the verdant badge long before the reason for their doing so has become apparent to the tribe. Illegitimacy is as little a disgrace among the Eskimo as it is among the Norwegians. The Eskimo girl who has a child but no husband wears her green hairband as unshamedly, as much as a matter of course, as the Norwegian bride who is already a mother, but has never been a wife, wears her bridal crown of green.

There is a very sufficient reason why fatherless children are at no very great discount in Eskimoland. It is so potent a reason, that because of it, a girl or widow who has children is in great demand in the marriage market,

most especially if she is the mother of a strapping boy or two. Each day of an Eskimo's life is a hard-earned victory over cold, and niggard nature. Every meal he eats is the spoil of some hard-won fight that he has waged with the sea or the snow, the fierce land game, or the fierce sea animals. Nor is there any such thing as laying up store for his old age; it is impossible. Therefore he must look forward to want in his last years, even probable starvation, unless he can depend upon the strength and generosity of some younger and stronger arm. It stands to reason, according to his simple faith, that the child he has fed and sheltered in its youth will gladly feed and shelter him when he grows old. And so for this reason, but not by any means always for this reason alone, he welcomes every child born to him, or is more than willing to marry the mother of many children. Eskimo orphans never need lack foster-parents; as a rule anyone and everyone is anxious to adopt them. Among some tribes, where the mother of a very young child dies, and no woman can be found to nurse it, it is painlessly put to death. This sounds very cruel—but is it? Nothing could be more pitiful than the fate of a waif and stray Eskimo baby; there is no sunshine for it to play and warm its naked little limbs in; there is no luscious fruits for it to have for the gathering. Every scrap of food an Eskimo eats, every inch of clothing an Eskimo wears, every shred of shelter an Eskimo knows, must be toiled for, fought for, and won, both gallantly and intelligently.

Every Eskimo boy is taught to make a *kaiak*, and all the instruments and utensils necessary to Eskimo hunting, fishing, travelling, and domestic life. The *kaiak* is, perhaps, at once the most useful and the most ingenious

of the Eskimo's achievements. It is a remarkably fashioned boat used for fishing and for sea hunting. Its completeness, its swiftness and agility, and the scientific nicety of its construction and arrangement might well put many civilised boat-builders to the blush. When the *kaiak* frame is completed it is turned over to some woman—wife, mother, sister, or sweetheart—who covers it with skin, leaving an opening only large enough for a man's body to pass through. The skin is prepared, sewn, and put on, solely by a woman, and she takes the greatest pride in doing her work superlatively well. The skin is usually stretched over the *kaiak*, in a raw or half-raw state.

When an Eskimo boy is eight, or even younger, his *kaiak*-training begins, for the Eskimo are *par excellence* the children of the sea. From it they get food, light, fuel, and raiment. The use of the *kaiak* involves great skill, and no one ever became adept in its management who had not been accustomed to it from his boyhood. When a boy is about eleven he is old enough to have a *kaiak* of his own. His father usually gives him this, or helps him to build it. When he is older and needs a full-sized boat he must build it for himself. Until the young Eskimo is fourteen, or perhaps fifteen, he contents himself with fishing. But after that he begins to go seal-hunting; and when he brings home his first large bull seal he is a man, he is self-supporting, and may marry as soon as he likes.

The Eskimo have no regular meal times. They eat when they are hungry, if they have anything to eat. The children are trained to play or work for several hours in the morning before they eat anything, as the Eskimo believe that more work, and better work, is done on an

empty stomach than can be accomplished after a meal. So Eskimo children are taught to go without breakfast. After a successful hunt, when the blubber has been divided and partly eaten, the family sit round the bubbling pot of seal's flesh, and the hunter relates his day's adventures. That is the children's hour. They listen with wide-eyed delight, particularly the embryo hunters—the small boys. The girl Eskimo are taught to row, and some of them are trained to do a man's work at a pinch, as well as their own. All the children are taught to be strictly honest, and every Eskimo girl knows that if she is but once caught stealing, her price in the marriage market will go down to zero, and stay down.

The Eskimo are tender parents. A man and woman who will face and go through the most terrible hardships bravely, even cheerfully, become quite unnerved when they see their children hungry. Perhaps that is the chief reason why Eskimo mothers suckle their children longer than do the mothers of other peoples. Dalager, writing on the Eskimo's unselfish love for their young, says: "They give food to their children even if they themselves are ready to die of hunger, for they live every day in hope of a happy change of fortune—a hope which really sustains life in many of them."

CHAPTER V.

ARABIAN CHILDREN.

"Come to me, O ye children!
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away.

"Ye open the eastern windows,
That look towards the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows,
And the brooks of morning run.

"In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,
But in mine is the wind of autumn,
And the first fall of the snow.

"Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere."

FAMOUS for centuries as the land of jewels and of perfume, Arabia is in reality almost gemless and spiceless. Much talked of for ages, it is but little known. Comparatively near Europe, and peculiarly rich in interest for Christian peoples, yet its coast and the line of its short inland boundary are almost unpunctured by lines of European travel. Arabia was the link between the East and the West until between thirty and forty years ago, when the Suez Canal took its place, and so changed the stream of Oriental-Occidental travel. The itinerant Arab mer-

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çhant princes gathered into the priceless burden of their caravans the precious stones and the costly spices of India and the far East, and the careless Europeans who bought from them loosely reasoned that the merchants and the merchandise had a common land of origin, and hence arose Arabia's unmerited repute of gem wealth and spice opulence. The precious stones of Arabia are few and far from priceless, but Arabia is rich in flowers and fruit, in literature and curious customs, in fascinating history, sacred and profane; and in the tents of the Bedouins are many maidens, lovely as that Hagar whom Abraham forsook and cast off, and from whom the Bedouins claim their proud and unbroken descent.

The Bedouins are the nomadic Arabs—the Arabs of pure Arabic blood—the roaming dwellers of the woods and pasture lands, the wild places far from the cities' gates.

Unlike the women of the town dwellers, the Bedouin women do not veil their faces; many do not even draw their head-cloth close at the approach of a stranger. In several tribes the women may drink coffee and chat with the men strangers within their gates. Hospitality is the first law of Arab life, and in many tribes, in many towns even, where seclusion is the strict rule of female life, a woman may—nay, must—in her husband's absence, entertain cordially the guest who asks the shelter of her house, or lifts the curtain of her tent, be he known or unknown, friend or foe. They have many pretty customs of hospitality, differing in each tribe from those in the others, but all tinged deeply with the imaginative, super-poetical spirit, which is the most essential, the most positive, essence of the Arab's nature. The mistress of the house

brings cool oil of roses for the indipping of the fingers of the just-arrived guest, or the daughter of the tent brings a flat censer of burning musk to perfume the hands and cheek of the stranger. The master of the house offers purple grapes, the children bring a tray of rose-leaf ointment to tint and refresh the fingers of the guest; or perhaps the tired traveller who, at the scorching hour of noon, claims hospitality finds a basin of perfumed snow placed for him beside the softest cushion in the coolest corner of the shady tent—snow gathered up an hour before sunrise, gathered on some near mountain's cold slope and scented with rose petals by the deft fingers of some graceful girl, petals plucked for her by the willing brown hands of some brown-eyed boy.

Arab women are brave to a degree. Bravery is the first principle inculcated by an Arab mother into the minds of her young daughters. The girls of Arabia are taught bravery as thoroughly, as universally, as are the boys of the American Indians, and at as tender years. In the myths of Arabia's pre-Islamitic days there are many records of the deeds of daring and the armed heroism of Arab women, and it is authentically chronicled that six and a half centuries after Christ, Ayeshah, the wife of Mohammed, led the great charge in the famous and ever-memorable "Battle of the Camel." For hundreds of years Arab Amazons "have taken, sword in hand, a considerable share in the wars and victories of Islam." And to-day no considerable force of Arab men-at-arms but has its virgin warrior, its Joan of Arc, its Maid of Mecca. Her litter is slung upon the hump of a grim, gigantic, black-painted war camel, and she and he lead the assault. She beckons on the troops, singing

to them as Miriam sang of old, when the hills on the Red Sea's eastern shore reverberated to the sweet clanging of the timbrel and to the jubilant notes of

> "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously ;
> The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

The Amazon of modern Araby calls out musical insult to the foe, and sings songs of triumph, of praise, and of encouragement to her clansmen. She is the mascot of her tribe. Her litter is the Arab warrior's oriflame, and around it is always the thick and the fierce of the Arab fight. Her death or capture means dire defeat, annihilation, or rout; but if victory crown their spears, she heads the triumphal march—hers the chief glory, hers the fondest congratulations, hers the first and the best of the spoil.

Arab women are resourceful—very. Arabia Felix, one of the three divisions of modern Arabia, was probably Sheba in the time of Solomon, and the domain of the nimble-minded queen who outwitted that sage monarch. Be that as it may, Arabian women have quick and facile minds, and use them deftly and swiftly. This is much a matter of blood, but it is also a matter of training, and the little girl is systematically taught to outwit and wheedle her brother. She is taught to plot before she is taught to walk. Indeed, she never is taught to walk; she is left to stumble on to and on in that common but necessary art. But she is taught to plan and to execute many a brilliant *coup d'état*, taught from her veriest babyhood.

In their youth many of the Arabian women are remarkably beautiful. They all walk well, run well, and rest and stand gracefully. And standing still is the *crux* of grace. They are all fond of dress and rich ornaments,

and all have fine, if lavish and tropical, taste. Dancing is their chief accomplishment; no Arab man dances, but every Arab woman does, and many of their customary dances would abash the least prudish of the devadasa of Hindustan, or the most flaming *première de ballet* in Italy.

Cooking, weaving, and the carrying of water are the principal industries of Arab women. The gay scarfs that they all wear are often the work of their own pink, henna-stained fingers. The Bedouin women weave, and teach their girls to weave, the coarse hair-cloth of which their tents are made. They weave bags and rough fabrics of linen and of wool. The women of the people are proficient in the peculiar Arabian cookery, in which liquid butter invariably plays the chief *rôle*, and in the making of bread, which they knead and toss on cushions until it is of wafer thinness, and then with a deft turn of the wrist toss it on to the rough sides of the stove or brick oven, where it sticks until baked. The women of the rich are famous for their preserves, which they scent with the essence of roses.

All Arab girls are taught to sing, but instrumental music is the sole province of nomadic professionals. All the Arabs are music-mad and poetry-mad. Poetry, music, and sweetmeats are both the pastime and the occupation of the women of the leisure classes. Men, women, and children, rich and poor, smoke. They drink sour milk, and love to feast upon the currant-like mesaa berries, ostrich eggs, and the red birnee dates. Perhaps the two forms of animal life with which the average Arab child is most familiar are the ostrich and the camel. I say "perhaps" because I have not forgotten the horse, and

I dare not quite say that in the land of his origin he plays the second part to any animal save man. Certainly the one form of vegetable life with which every Arab child is most familiar is the date.

Dates are to the Arab what bananas are to most of Africa and much of Asia; what bread, meat, and fish are to Europe; what the cocoanut is to Ceylon; what rice is to India, China, Burmah, and Siam. An intelligent Arab, Europe-travelled, was asked how he liked England, and what he thought of her. He shook his handsome head kindly but sadly, and very sadly said, "No dates grow there."

The ostrich eggs which the Arabs so love to eat are very large. They weigh three pounds more often than not, and they are vastly tastier than any other eggs that birds lay. Even the poor Arabs may sometimes eat them, for the ostrich often deserts her eggs and leaves them to the cuddling of the sand and to the hatching of the sun. That more than reconciles me to the wearing of ostrich feathers, and almost would, even if each feather meant an ostrich mother's injury—and I have never worn a bird's wing, or a bird, on my head, on an evening dress, or on my fan since I came to years of comparative discretion. Among sentient animals does maternal cruelty go further than that of the females of the ostrich tribe? Yes, among the mammalia, among the highest branch of the mammal family. For I have known—and what intelligent observant person has not?—scores of little babies descend into the lonely valley of the Great Shadow because their mothers (French-frocked and fair of face, perhaps, but black and cold of heart and false of sex) left them to artifice and the bottle, and denied them the sweet, warm

sustenance which nature gave them when she gave woman the infinite blessing, the omnipotent power of motherhood.

Arab marriage customs are unique and interesting. Divorce and marriage are of the first facility; and marriages are celebrated very early, so early that they often come—on the bride's part at least—under the head of child-marriages. Polygamy is permissible, but almost unpractised. An Arabian marriage ceremony is simplest of the simple. In the town a statement—a bargain—is made before the Cadi. In the tents of the roving Bedouins a lamb is slaughtered under the canvas of the bride's maiden home. Whether celebrated in the desert or in the city, the marriage is almost as easily undone as done. Wives are changed most frequently, usually to the supreme satisfaction of everyone concerned (save when there are children, and then it does not often happen), and without raising a single ripple of censure or wee bubble of ill-natured gossip. If a wife is sent back to her father as unsatisfactory, or as unsatisfied, she takes with her her marriage portion. If the husband is a Bedouin, he adds a she-camel to the girl's original dowry.

The Arab women obey their husbands (nominally, at least), serve them, and call them "master," as Sarah did; often they rule them with a rod of iron, as Sarah, once at least, ruled Abraham. And with these descendants of Ishmael it is a never-broken, if an unwritten, law that love and reverence in abundance shall ever be a mother's portion.

Every Arab boy is born into one of two sharply defined classes. Either he is born of, belongs to, and is one of, the "dwellers in brick," or he is a "tent dweller." He is urban, or he is rural. If he is born a Bedouin his home

ARAB WOMEN AND CHILDREN
(BRICK DWELLERS)

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will be an ambulatory tent woven of coarse black hair by the women of his tribe; his life will be a life of poverty, of frequent want, of adventure, and probably of theft and of warfare—certainly a life of incessant make-shift. If he is city born, his home will be a stationary edifice of more or less comfort, of at least some architectural system, and most probably with foundation and walls of brick or some other hard substance; his life will be one of comparative refinement—a life not lacking æsthetic dignity.

Arabia itself is often divided into Arabia Felix (Happy), Arabia Petraea (Stony), and Arabia Deserta (Desert), but her children are of two divisions—happy and unhappy—Arabs to whom life is well possible, and Arabs to whom life is well-nigh impossible; those who receive life as a gift and enjoy it, those who receive life as a burden and endure it, and yet must needs fight for it inch by inch, day by day, and fight against fearful odds, with nature itself for their implacable adversary. The former dwell where the great dates ripen and swell to perfect lusciousness and flavour, where the rope-like vines bend and groan in the wind with the weight of grape bunches, such as the spies of Joshua brought in triumph from the Promised Land—grapes which the wondering people of Israel welcomed as eloquent witnesses of the natural opulence of Canaan and the truth of God. The latter wander sadly upon the shifting sands of the hot desert, where nothing grows save thorny shrubs, and nothing animal lives but deadly, weazen reptiles; they count themselves content if they escape destruction by the terrible simoom, and if among the few bushes of the arid sands they find that strange small shrub from which they obtain a tasteless, but not un-

nutritious, food which is the precise counterpart of the manna described in the Bible; they count themselves happy when they reach some oasis, formed by the sudden up-bubbling of some stream that has been lost in, and submerged by, the sands many, many miles away.

Two things every Arab boy is taught, be he Bedouin or of the cities: he is taught the art, the grace of hospitality, and he is taught to love, to understand, and to rule the horse.

Arabia is thought to be the original home of the horse. Certainly it has been its happiest home. The Arab boy is taught to give his horse date-paste and camel's milk, and feed it more than occasionally with meat. And yet there are no gentler horses in any land. The Arabs claim that their best breed of horses are the direct descendants of the horses of Solomon; this breed is unquestionably kept absolutely inviolate. We all know that the Arab will almost part with life itself sooner than with a favourite horse, and almost every Arab horse is a favourite. A family of horses and a family of men live together and belong the first to the other, from generation to generation. An Arab boy is taught his own genealogy very early, and he is taught the genealogy of the horses belonging to his family as early and as thoroughly. He as much expects to inherit his father's horses as he expects to inherit his wealth or poverty, and far more than he expects to inherit his family name. So strong is the feeling of inalienable possession of horseflesh among the Arabs that, if a mare is sold, any colt foaled within a year of the purchase must, by law, be passed over to the mother's former owner. There are five divisions or families of the best Arabian horses; each of these five

divisions is named after one of the five favourite mares of Mohammed. Every boy in Arabia knows the characteristics of each division, and the history—real or traditional—of its famous ancestress.

Every boy born to rank is inordinately proud of it, and is taught to be so. There is no true rank in Arabia but the rank of descent.

The Arabs are born with wonderful senses of sight, of smell, and of hearing. These natural gifts are sedulously cultivated in all the boys, and among the Bedouins often develop into an almost-perfection unrivalled among any other people, save only the American Indians.

Circumscribed and difficult as is the life of the Bedouins, they are the Arabs *par excellence*—the descendants of Ishmael—and it is they who preserve the most antique customs and manners, keeping them in many ways identical with those of the days of Abraham. The "dwellers in brick" seem tacitly to allow, in some sort, the superiority of the Bedouins (though those wanderers are often badly treated, and generally seem abashed when they come into the cities), for at Mecca the descendants of Mohammed send their eight-day-old boys to the tents of some adjacent tribe of Bedouins, and leave them there for ten or twelve or sometimes for fifteen years; and the boy temporarily adopted into the tribe is treated and educated quite as is the boy born within the hair-cloth tent. This is a custom of immense antiquity. Mohammed himself was reared so in the Bedouin tribe of Beni Sadd; and until to-day all sheriffs (descendants of the Prophet) have been so reared and educated. The sovereign himself is no exception to this rule. An Arab of fifteen is very near manhood—often quite on its threshold. Hence it follows that a vast

proportion of the boys so reared return to the tents of the Bedouins to choose their wives. This keeps the race of Mohammed almost intact and pure, although they form part of a most mixed population; and this custom preserves the customs of the time of the Prophet to the end of the nineteenth century—in Mecca at least.

Every Arab boy is taught to ride well, furiously, and long. It is the Arab who carries the cloths of India to Africa, and distributes them throughout the length and breadth of civilised and half-civilised Africa. In return he carries to India gums and ivories and dyewoods. The Bedouins are expert traders, and deal largely in musk and civet, in ostrich feathers, in senna, and in balsam. Most Arab boys are taught to judge the qualities and values of those and other articles of merchandise. Every young Arab is taught to drive a sharp bargain, to judge character, and to flatter. Here is an Arab proverb which many of the lads are made to learn by heart and all know and value its meaning if not its words: "If he whom you stand in need of is mounted upon an ass, exclaim, 'What a beautiful horse you have there, my lord!'"

An Arab boy is never rude to his mother. He may wrangle with his brother and even, on rare, rare occasions, defy his father, but his mother is never less than sacred in his eyes. Every Arab boy is taught what Hagar bore for Ishmael, and no Arab boy ever forgets it. It seems the instinct of the race to make the utmost possible recompense to motherhood.

Hospitality is the first law of Arab life. The Arab boy is taught its duties from his very birth—taught by iterated precept and by constant example. If he is a Bedouin, he must share his last handful of dried dates, the last

drain from his skin of brackish water, with the stranger within the shadow of his desert home. If he is of the towns, he must learn a hundred ceremonial details of hospitality, such as the words of prescribed welcome, the distance, towards or over his threshold, to be taken at the arrival of a distinguished guest, or the manner in which food must be offered to his guest. He is trained to give up the softest cushion and the warmest corner to him he entertains, and to spend for that entertainment his last coin or his one hour of leisure or of most pressing business. In many cities, chiefly in those of unmixed population, a house of entertainment, of rest, and of free hospitality, is kept up at the public expense, or at that of some rich individual. There the traveller may receive not a dole of bread and a mug of small beer (as he once could at every convent door, and still may at the postern of St. Cross) but shelter, food, and courteous welcome without limit. The best that the town affords is brought to the "house of welcome." Juicy tamarinds and fragrant almonds, citrons and apricots, water-melons and sweet-meats made of camel's milk, he may eat of to repletion, if such be in season. Whatever the season he will have coffee of the best, coffee which is the Arab's nectar, and might well be ours if we knew how to make it.

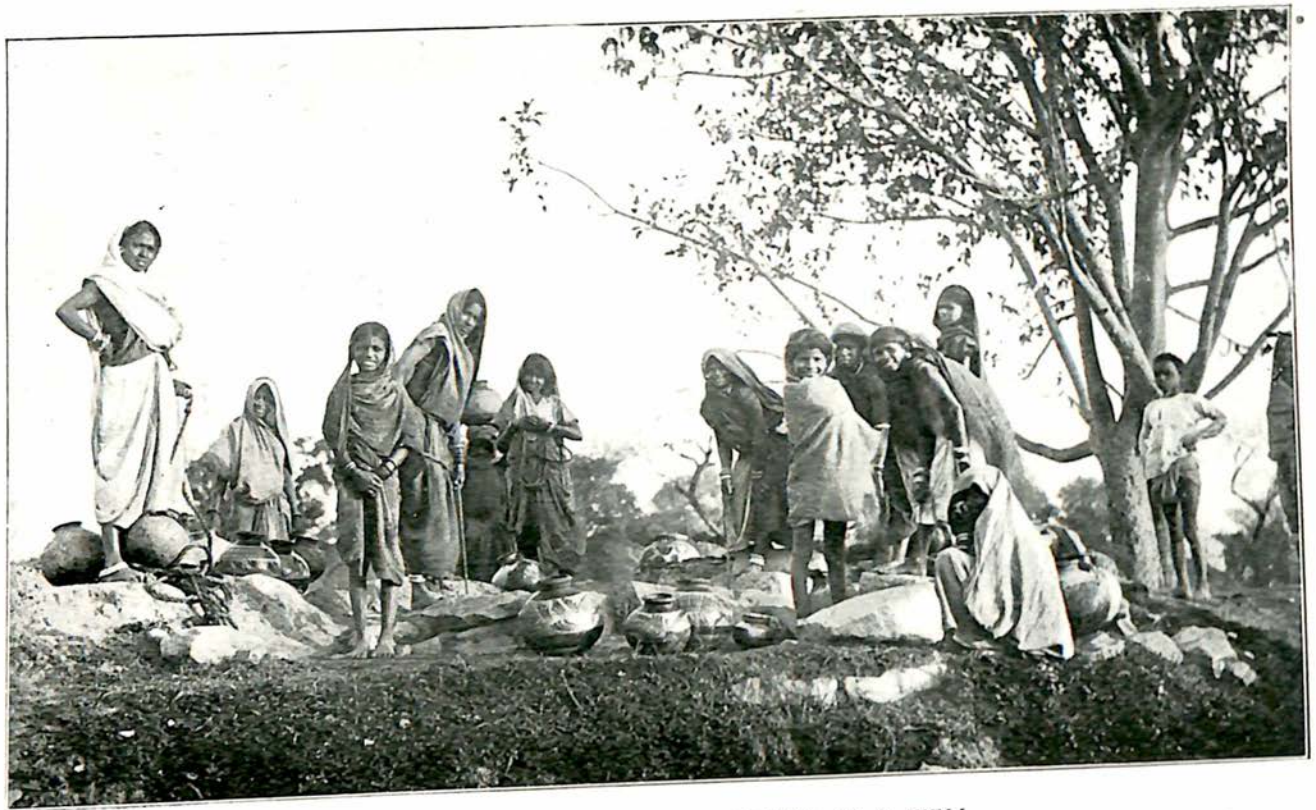
Every Arab boy is taught to make coffee, for when a guest arrives in any Arab house coffee is made for him by a slave, whose chief duty it is to do so; but in a house where there is no slave skilful in coffee-making, the host himself must bruise the berries and brew the delightful cup.

CHAPTER VI.

HINDU CHILDREN.

"The shadow of her face upon the wall
May take your memory to the perfect Greek,
But when you front her, you would call the cheek
Too full, sir, for your models, if withal
That bloom it wears could leave you critical,
And that smile reaching toward the rosy streak;
For one who smiles so, has no need to speak
To lead your thoughts along, as steed to stall.
A smile that turns the sunny side o' the heart
On all the world, as if herself did win
By what she lavished on an open mart!
Let no man call the liberal sweetness, sin,—
For friends may whisper as they stand apart,
'Methinks there's still some warmer place within.'"

WE had a little journalistic dinner last night—three of us—and our table-talk was of the shop shoppy. The two men did most of the talking, and I did most of the listening, which was only fit, for they were both wielding trenchant pens in London when I was learning my alphabet. They are the Nestors of the English press, and I, if no longer young in years, am, compared to them, young, very young, in journalistic crime. A question arose between them, and was discussed at length, not without heat, and left unanswered. I will not quote what they said, but I will tell you what the question was—the question that came on with the bunch of roses for my



HINDU GIPSY WOMEN AND CHILDREN AT A WELL

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bolt, the sandwiches of caviare, and the dried liches; the question that hadn't had the *goût* to get itself answered at the coffee, but like an ill-bred, tactless guest, outstayed its welcome, and outlived the cigarettes. It was, "Is it harder to write an article of limited length when you have nothing to say, or when you have altogether too much?"

Now, I have no doubt about that at all. I know for a surety that it is far easier to invent ideas, or at a pinch, even facts, than to sort them and to select the most essential few from the interesting and suggestive many. I found out long ago that it was far easier to say something when I had nothing to say, than to be brief when my mind was quickened with my subject and my pen teeming with "copy." If I had one remaining doubt on this score (which I haven't), the title line which I have written above would dispel it. "Hindu children"! How am I to begin? How squeeze any illuminative part of what I ought to say, and would like to say, into the three or four thousand words of this little chapter? Which nine-tenths shall I leave unsaid? In my dilemma I'll fall back upon Horace, and "begin anywhere," which was, I remember, our very convenient translation of *in medias res* in my school days.

Shall I show you a letter that I lately received from a Hindu lad who lives in the Burra Bazaar, in Calcutta? I think it a delightful letter, and I quote it in its entirety, because I find that Gholab has very largely written a chapter. I supplement the letter with such little explanations as may seem needed to make it entirely clear to all readers:—

"Calcutta, April the twenty-eight day, the Year Eighteen Hundred and ninety eight, (English style).

"DEAR MRS. MILN,—The book has come through the postal service, and I make you my profound salaams. The pictures give much pleasure. My mother, who you will recall, reads not the English, regards them with much satisfaction. Your birds of Europe are more handsome than I did think. My father order me I send you too his thanks that you pay me such honour, and says the silk sells well, but he put by some piece, the best quality, of the yellow you do like, until you memsahib to Calcutta do come back. You do remember me that I have two sisters. Now I have one more. She is one week to-day old. My father bid me I say to you all about it, for he recalls always how you interest you alway in the customs of our country. And he laugh and he say I must repeat to you that he has kissed his new daughter, and not give it the curse that it be not a boy, and he say you do you not think, madame, he is a very good Hindu man that he not be angry that he have three girls? My grandmother, the mother of my father, is here, and she take the charge of us, and all while my mother keep her cushions. Our little one is not yet named. My grandmother is angry that my father would give her a name that is beautiful from one of our poets. She wish that the name be that of one of our goddesses, as is our people's custom, for it brings luck to speak the name of a deity, and, if a child have the name of a god, the parents and friends must often speak its name, and so get much blessing. My father hold not with that, and my grandmother get great anger, that my father not keep my mother in more strict purdah, and let her sometimes go somewhat abroad, and my grandmother get the most anger because my sisters be not, as is the Hindu custom, put behind the purdah when they are six. But my father he say it not Hindu custom—but a custom we take from the Mahommedans and that Brahma nowhere command it, and he like his daughters that they grow somewhat in the sunshine as do the flowers. The lotus flowers sweeten the air and are pure, and

that young girls sweeten the world for all, and that to keep a maiden modest it is not needful to keep her in a prison. And my grandmother tell him he is an owl's son and he disgrace his caste, and she threaten him the punishment. And he, he say her 'salaam,' and he go away quiet, but to me he make with his eye the wink. And he say to me my grandmother have the prejudice. And I not know that, and I say to him what that is? And he tell me the prejudice it is a disease more bad than the cholera, and it fall upon the ignorant and upon women. But he not let my grandmother that she hear him, for in Hindustan we must show the great respect to our parents for always. My father he take me sometimes — but rarely — to a house on Bentinck street, and there we eat the meat. But no one must know, for it is a break of our Hindu rule. My father he is advanced, what you call 'Radical.' My mother she not mind, for she say Vishnu has sent her a good husband and seven beautiful sons, which is the prayer of every Hindu woman. But my grandmother she fall to rage and beat her breast. She is a 'Conservative,' as you say. But we tell not my mother that we eat sometimes the meat, for it would give her the grief. My father he pull her ear-jewel and he tell her she is only one 'Moderate' (as you would say, 'neither the fish, the fowl, the flesh, nor the good red herrings') in her philosophy. And she shake her arm-jewels at him and she say, 'I have no phylosophy. I am a Hindu woman. I serve my husband and I nurse his children.'

"When the baba was born my father sent a servant to call our relateds and many friends. They sent gifts of many kinds to the new child, and our father sent gifts in return. If it had been a boy, music and noise would have been made on a big shell. Our father took the baba to his arms. That with us is the receiving of it into the *bhai* or family, and is a solemn acknowledgement of parentage. Then our father put a gold money in its hand and said a blessing. That is with us always a custom. But yesterday it was a day to tell you of. Our goddess, Shasthi, has the care of all children, She is our goddess and when we are six days born there is much worship of her outside the door of

that room where the child and its mother are. Fruit we lay before her and white rice, rich sweets, fresh milk, and new garments. After this many are placed in the room with the child: the skin of a serpent, a brick from Siva's temple, new wood, fruit—two kinds, silver and gold, and with a palm leaf, a dish of ink, and a new pen. All these things have meaning. The pen and the ink are for the God of Fate, who with them writes upon the baba's forehead all that its life will be.

"To-morrow too, we have much that we like. It is the great gift day. Our father will give to all the chidren of our house and to all that live near many things that are good to have. And in the Burra Bazaar their are many children, they swarm here as you will well remember, as do the sacred pigeons you memsahib did use to feed, when you came to buy silk. *Pice* we will get, and rice and sweetmeats—fine ones as you do give a god—and eight kinds of parched peas and many strings of *cowries*. At night we have what we think much fun. All who are children go together to the door of our mother's room, and with sticks we knock, and cry to her—we must all use our voice together—how is her child, and then we all cry very strong 'In peace then let it rest on the lap of its mother.' Lady, I write too long. My pleasure to make you a communication make me forget to tire you. I ask for forgiveness that I make you the bore. And I ask many forgivenesses if I write too bold, and that I do start my epistle with 'Dear Mrs. Miln.' I have now an English teacher, for I am some day to England to go and learn that I become a gentleman of the law, or of the hospital. My father he tell me that the English letter should begin like I did put it. We all send you many thanks. My mother pray you, you accept her salaams most many. My father beg you, you send him some order that he may do some service to you, memsahib. I did take a liberty to send you a box of chutnee, made of sweet mangoes. Lady, your servants remember how you like. To the sahib, your master, please say our respect, and to your master the young sahib and the missie baba,

"Respectful and faithful, your esteemed friend

"GHOLAB.

"To the excellent Miln Sahib's obedient memsahib."

Gholab is fifteen. He was only ten when I met him. Our meeting was interesting; but of that hereafter, for as he himself owns, his letter is long. There are many such boys in India—boys with "Conservative" grandparents, "Moderate" mothers, and "Progressive" fathers; fathers ambitious to be cosmopolitan, no matter how grotesquely, and to attain to European *savoir faire.*

When a Hindu baby is six months old a function is held in its honour. It is dressed from the skin out in soft silk. Its little head is very carefully shaved. Its family and its family friends gather about it, and literally overwhelm it with gifts. It is solemnly, and with much symbol and ceremony, fed with boiled rice, and for the first time. When I say its family I mean an indeed goodly gathering. In a Hindu family are many members. It is a thing of almost innumerable ramifications and of wonderful elasticity. Generation upon generation are gathered together. All who are of the same kindred—by blood or by adoption—belong to the same *bhai*, or family circle, with the Hindus.

Among the poor, and very often among the rich, the children under six or seven years of age are clad in nothing, unless we regard as clothing the "lucky string" by which a potent charm is tied about a boy's waist, and the fantastic jewellery that is suspended from and fastened about every part of his sister's plump little person. Ah! well, sufficient unto the country is the custom thereof, and who shall say that the Hindu toddlers are not adequately clad? I have often watched a group of the pretty brown nakeds rollicking in the rollicking Punjabi sunshine, and thought "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." No evil spirit dare molest the urchin who

wears the charm-hung "lucky string." And as for the wee maiden, she is so covered with jewels and jewellery, with necklets, and armlets, and wristlets, and anklets, that hypercriticalness itself—not to mention pure modesty, for she never thinks evil—even hypercriticalness itself has no excuse to cry out for more garments upon, and less exposure of, the pretty, tawny-coloured little girl. The amount of jewellery, valuable or otherwise, worn by a Hindu maiden knows but two limits: the limits of her father's purse and the available number of square inches upon her own body. Many a Hindu girl of four or five is so behung with coins and stones, and solid brown flesh, that it speaks volumes for the health and strength of her delicate brown ankles that they are able to bear her about. The little girl also wears a "lucky chain." But to European eyes it looks insignificant in all the splendid company of strings of rupees and ropes of amber and agate.

But, whatever garments of loom and of needle they may lack, every Hindu child is sweetly clad with cleanliness. One of the first lessons taught them, and taught seriously as a religious duty by no means ever to be neglected, is that they must bathe thoroughly at least once a day. In many castes they bathe twice a day, and make a complete change of their clothing as often. Grant me that there is some good in a religion that enjoins a daily cleansing of the body, and that keeps the flesh casket of the mind jewel clean!

The birth of a son is the great desire of every Hindu wife, and the devout woman who lacks a son bathes in the sacred Ganges, which she believes to be the sweat of Siva. The three great Hindu deities are: Brahma, the creator;

A HINDU BABY IN HIS CRADLE

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Vishnu, the preserver; and Siva, the destroyer. Why the sweat of the destroyer should be held potent to ensure the greatest of blessings is a mystery, an unfathomable mystery, a Hindu mystery.

The four great Hindu castes or caste divisions are: first and highest, the Brahmins, or priests, law givers, and rulers; second, the Chuthee, or soldiers and magistrates; third, the Vaishno, or merchants, etc.; last and lowest, the Sudras, or menials, etc. Each of these castes is divided and sub-divided into many others, and the details of a child's life depend greatly upon the caste into which it is born, but it is sure to be full of ceremonial, of observance, and of symbol. And the children of all the castes have in common a perfect passion for filial respect, obedience, and love, a fear of the gods, vivid imaginations, retentive, and sometimes parrot-like, memories, and a warm, tender sensitiveness of heart, and a pulsing, responsive humanity, which makes Sir Edwin Arnold's glowing words mere cold, descriptive accuracy, when he speaks of them as—

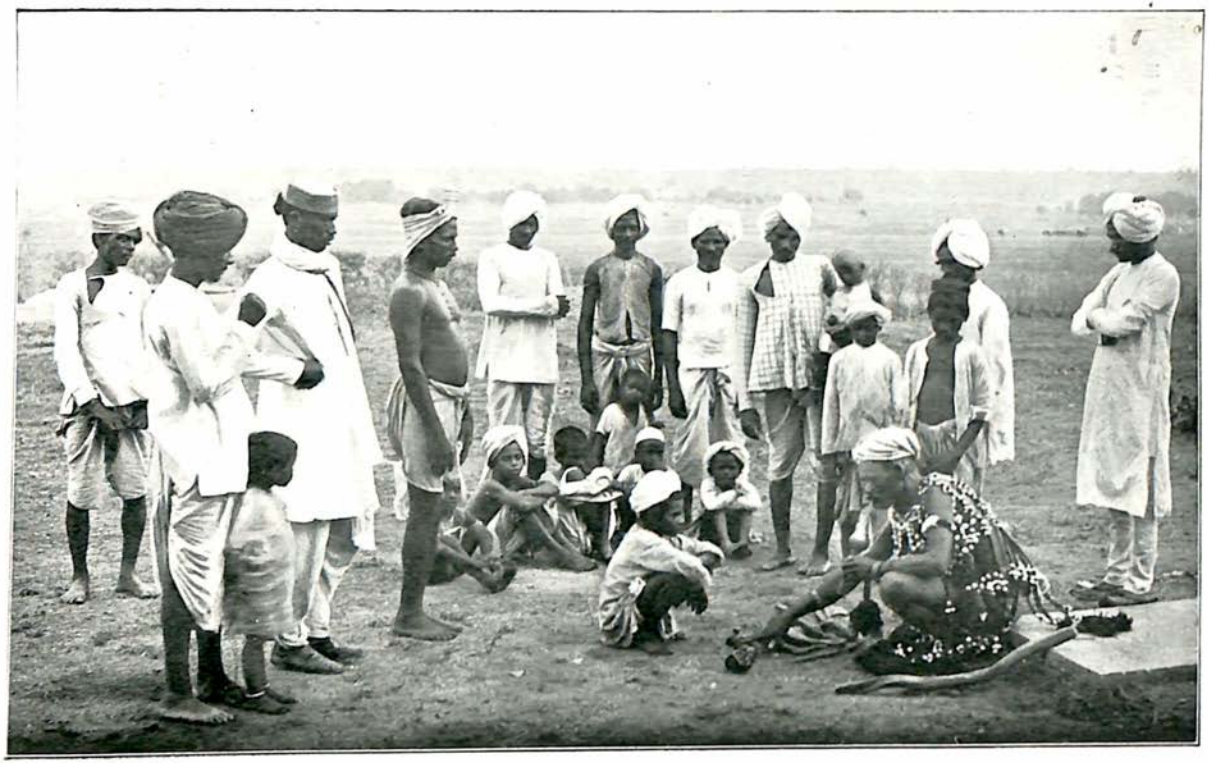
> "Peoples of the sun—
> Gentle, soft-mannered, by a kind word won
> To such quick kindness."

Among the Brahmins one queer little affectation is an honoured custom—a custom that knows no breach, but is invariably and gravely observed. When a boy wishes to obtain or celebrate his Brahminical majority (he may be eight, or sixteen, or between), he begs his parents to allow him to become a fakir—a holy mendicant, a religious beggar. They entreat him to remain with them. He is firm in his intention. At length, often after many days, he yields to them reluctantly but dutifully. The three

following days he spends committing to heart prescribed portions of the sacred Hindu books. He remains in rooms whose only light is artificial, and must by no means look upon the sun or sunlight. Early on the fourth day he goes to bathe—in the Ganges, if possible; if not, in the most sacred water accessible. While he bathes he prays with much form, and, I believe, as a rule, with much earnestness. This prayer-bath is called his "second birth." Henceforth he is held clean of heart and pure of person, and, indeed, a Brahmin.

When a Hindu boy is about five his school life begins. A lucky day is chosen. When that day breaks he bathes, and is clad entirely in new garments. Then he goes to the temple and makes a sacrifice of fruits and rice to Ganesh or to Sarasvati.

Ganesh is quite the jolliest-looking of the Hindu gods, which is even more of a distinction than it sounds, for there are 330,000,000 deities in the Hindu heaven; that is, almost twice as many gods as worshippers. Never mind, it gives the Hindu large scope of choice as to whom he shall worship and whom he shall not, and it gives the gods an endless and fascinating occupation of quarrel and rivalry. But back to his jolly godship, Ganesh. When he was young, very young, he went out to play. Now, he was a careless, naughty little god—almost a cinnamon-coloured Eros for irresponsibility—and he lost his head, and he didn't know where to find it. Now, a god of learning without a head wouldn't do at all; that even were worse than a Cupid without a heart. So Ganesh's mother found an elephant's head, which was accommodating enough to be lying about, and put it upon Ganesh's headless neck, and appropriately enough



HINDU CHILDREN WATCHING A CONJURER

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too, say I. And you'll agree with me if you've ever made intimacies among the sagacious elephants of Burmah and of Ind.

Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, is one of the universally worshipped of the Hindu deities. She sits in a lotus or Oriental water-lily, and she plays tirelessly upon a lute. Yellow is her favourite colour, and in the early springtime, when her festival is kept, all the festival-makers wear bright yellow. Among the conservative Hindus, women and girls may not worship Sarasvati, much less join in the celebration of her festival; for the girls must not be taught to read. Many Hindus even now believe that the girl who is taught to read will live to be a widow, and widowhood is a Hindu woman's purgatory, and this is one almost insurmountable obstacle that the pioneers of Hindu female education find across their pathway. I am told, on the best authority, that even in Europe a wife who writes is beautifully calculated to drive a man to early death; but I cannot see how a wife who reads (unless she read aloud) should hasten a man's demise—and yet! well, if the Hindus believe it, they are, to my thinking, but wise to leave books unread of their daughters; for next to being an old maid, the blackest, blankest fate that can befall any woman is widowhood. At Sarasvati's festival sometimes her image is worshipped, but more often paper and ink receive the sacrifices and prayers. On that day no good Hindu writes or reads unless driven by stern necessity, and then if he must write he uses red ink. And on that day every inkstand is emptied and cleaned and laid before Sarasvati, that she may consecrate it for the coming year. How foolish! How childish! How superstitious! How heathenish! Yes, indeed, but how pretty! How more

than pretty! How pregnant of poetry! So, at least, I think. And if you see in it nothing to admire and applaud, why then, you and I quarrel. It is a noisy festival too, I must add, the festival of Sarasvati, and full of dance and song, and unbridled romp and flowing cup.

The details of the Hindu lad's school life are unique and diverting. Child-marriages are a burning, very burning, question. The lives of little Hindu girls are both picturesque and interesting, but my space says that I must leave them—leave these pretty little Hindu ones that I love so well; but if you will go and seek them, and watch them as they play among the coral trees and fields of fragrant, pale-green flowered henna plants, you will find that I have indeed not told one-tenth of what I might, or exaggerated one jot.

CHAPTER VII.

NORWEGIAN CHILDREN.

"Lips that shall call thee 'mother!' at thy breast
Feed the young life, wherein thy nature feels
Its dear fulfilment: little hands are pressed
On the white fountain love alone unseals.

"Look down, and let Life's tender daybreak throw
A second radiance on thy ripened hour:
Retrace thine own forgotten advent so,
And in the bud behold thy perfect flower.

* * * * *

"The father in his child beholds this truth,
His perfect manhood has assumed its reign:
Thou wear'st anew the roses of thy youth,—
The mother in her child is born again."

NORWAY is a feather in my cap—a great big Royal-red plume. There is no other country in Europe (except Sweden) in which the standard of primary education is so high, education itself so general and thorough, and the standard of morality, in many ways, so low as in Norway. I do not believe in education (*i.e.* diluted book-learning) for the masses. I emphatically disbelieve in flannelette culture and calico civilisation at eleven-three-farthings per yard. I believe that children should be educated: the best qualities in them drawn out and developed along the lines of their probable and possible lives. I believe that they should one and all be taught the alphabet of nature, and that they should know the leaves of a birch tree from the foliage of a beech, the

rustling of an oak from the whispering of the willow, the fruit of the fig tree from the purple burden of the passion vine. I would have the State see to it that every child born beneath the shadow of its flag knew of a surety which roots were nourishing, which poisonous; which fruits were wholesome, which disease-dealing; see to that the merest toddler could distinguish to a nicety between the nutritious mushroom and the deadly toad-stool. But of the *Alpha* of letters, the *Beta* of science, the *Gamma* of psychology, I would have the young plebeian blissfully ignorant. If I might rule the world, children should be taught to use their hands—all children have hands—and it should be a criminal matter to try to cram a quart of intellect into a pint of brain, or to force children to use their minds who have none. Now, the powers that in Norway be, don't take my view of national education. Every Norwegian child is sent to school, kept at school, and well stuffed with the three R's and a score of other things. Yet there is, perhaps, no other country in which drunkenness is so general, and there is absolutely no other country, civilised or semi-civilised, in which the percentage of fatherless children is so large. And so I call Norway a feather in my cap—I who heartily disbelieve in over-education.

Education is compulsory between eight and fifteen. In every city, in every town, there is an abundance and a variety of stationary schools (I am writing of free schools only), and the most sparsely peopled districts are provided with ambulatory schools, which move from place to place so systematically and so thoroughly that there is no child in Norway who is not included within some school's radius at least once a year, and if only for a brief term.

NORSE CHILDREN

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Twenty-three years ago there were 1911 of these itinerant schools in Norway. They were in charge of 999 teachers, and were attended by 30,000 scholars. Norway's population that year was 1,817,000. These thirty thousand children represented little more than an eighth of Norway's school children, and an eighth so scattered that the expense incurred in reaching them was a positive and painful drain upon the national purse. But it never occurred to the Government, nor to any individual Norseman, that there was any way out of the difficulty, or that the most distant, the most isolated one of these thirty thousand children could be allowed, much less might be allowed, to drift into manhood or womanhood without his or her dole of book-lore. There were 267,000 Norwegian children of pupil age that year, and only 5000 were unattendant of school—less than one in every fifty-four. In each of those five thousand cases the reason of absence was positively unavoidable—idiocy, acute and absolute inability.

There are also free primary schools, agricultural schools, manual schools, industrial schools for girls, midwifery schools for young women, normal schools, schools of science, and universities throughout the peninsula. There are very many private schools also, and every school, both public and private, is under the strict supervision of the Board of Education; and if the instruction of a private school falls below the prescribed standard, the school is abolished, the teachers evicted, and the pupils ordered off to some other school. Parents who neglect to send their children to school are fined; and if repeatedly neglectful the children are taken from them, placed with some other family chosen by the Board, and the parents are compelled to pay for their maintenance. Once a year all the

boys in the free schools are given a public feast, and give a public military and scholastic exhibition. No other day is so provocative of general and unfeigned enthusiasm.

In families of large wealth, where tutors and governesses are employed, those teachers are invariably treated as loved and honoured members of the families, and among the rural poor the peasant teacher is always one of the most respected members of the community whose children he instructs.

The graves of Norway are regarded with a filial devotion only equalled by the ancestor-worshippers of China, Korea, and parts of Japan; and they are kept with a trim nicety and almost daily care of which the most devoted son in China never dreamed. The graveyards lie in the shadow of the churches. And here the people gather every Sunday, long before the hour of service, watering, pruning, and training the vines and flowers that grow above their dead, and planting new plants and blossoms. They wear gala dresses for the most part, and chat and laugh right gaily. The function is by no means a sad one, and the grave of a remote ancestor is as carefully tended, as elaborately decorated, as is that of the brother or father lost yesterday. Flowers and vines are coaxed and snipped, and bent into fantastic symbolical shapes. Saddest, holiest, are the tiny graves where fragrant, trailing roses have been twisted into perfect cradles with soft bunches of lilies of the valley and delicate bluebells at the cradles' sides. But these little beds of the long, long sleep, are in no vast proportion; for the children of Norway lead happy, active, out-of-door lives for the most part, are sensibly clad and fed, and live to maturity —very often to their second childhood.

WITH THEIR GRANDSIRE

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Du Chaillu, who lived so long in Scandinavia, and knew and liked the Norse folk so well, writes: "One night at Haugen, while in profound slumber, I found myself suddenly awakened by a rather rough shaking, and opening my eyes, I saw friend Thomas (his host) with a candle in one hand and a bottle with two small glasses in the other. 'Paul,' said he, 'you may have heard my wife cry out a little while ago; she has just given birth to a fine infant.' Without saying another word, he put the candle on the table, and filling the two glasses added, 'Let us celebrate the event, and you must empty the glass.' To refuse would have been the height of impropriety, and have shown a great lack of friendship; so I wished long life to the new-born, and speedy recovery to the wife."

It is the custom on the birth of a child for the wife of every neighbour to cook a dish of flödegröd (this is porridge cooked with cream instead of milk) or a rice pudding, and bring it to the convalescent; there is a good deal of rivalry among the matrons, who try to outdo each other in the quality and the size of the dish. And this dish is one of the first that every Norwegian girl is taught to prepare, and to prepare well. The men of the family and their men friends celebrate a birth with wine and the wine cup. Indeed, they are true to their Viking blood in most ways, and they celebrate every conceivable and many inconceivable events with potations strong and deep.

A christening is always followed by a feast and a frolic. All the national dainties are prepared, the national drink by no means forgotten, and relatives from near and wide bidden to break bread and drain tankard and bowl. In many a family an old drinking-tankard of chased silver,

almost beyond value, is only used to pledge the health of the just born, the just wedded, or the memory of the just dead. The pastor and his wife are always invited to the christening feast, and are often the merriest there.

The christening itself is very like that in the Church of England. The babies are all very splendid with white satin bows. After the ceremony proper, the parents and godparents pass behind the altar, which never stands quite against the chapel's wall, and lay upon its back edge gifts of thanks for the clergyman.

Children receive the Communion when they are about fifteen, and confirmation is so general that it is not infrequent to see the advertisement, "Wanted a confirmed housemaid," which does not mean that she must be a godly damsel, but that she must be fifteen, or a little older. Except under great stress of circumstances no child is made to do much work until after confirmation. Only dire poverty ever drives a Norwegian to allow his unconfirmed daughter really to work.

All the Norwegian children are taught to skate, to row, and to fish. All the girls are taught to cook, to knit, to milk, and to churn. All the boys are prepared for service, either naval or military, are taught to build boats, to hunt, to build houses, and to sail.

They live in simple, airy homes, these children of the Northland. They live simple, well-aired lives. They have many games and charming little customs of their own; but, on the whole, they live very closely with their elders, sharing their food, their thoughts, and their habits.

Christmas is the greatest of great days in Norway. Old and young play blind man's buff, and sing and dance, and feast and shout, and give and receive, and wear their

best their very best, bibs and tuckers. The very animals are feasted, and in the country you will see fastened to the eaves of every house a tuft of wheat, or a bunch of grain, for the wild birds' Noel feast. The poorest peasant, the tiniest child, will hoard a coin—if but the smallest—to buy a handful or two of grain to swell the birds' Yuletide feast!

These children are taught to be courteous and friendly, to shake hands with everyone, and say, "Thanks for the food" after every meal; and to be as hospitable as the Arabs are.

The boys are taught to shoot and trap the eider-duck, and the girls are taught to hoard and quilt the down. A Norwegian matron will show you the number of her eider-down beds in proof of her beauty in her girlhood, for the Norwegian youth who would say, "I love you," and say it convincingly, deposits a heap of eider-down at his chosen maiden's feet. The American Indian counts his victories by the scalp-locks at his belt. The Norwegian beauty counts her conquests by her quilts.

The Norse children swim uncommonly well; better far than the children of any other Northern people. But their swimming falls far below that of Malay children, of the children of Hawaii and Ceylon. There are several branches of athletics in which the soft-eyed, dreamy-faced, languorous-motioned children of the Southern seas excel all others. Above everything, they excel in aquatic sports and exercises. Perhaps this, in some slight degree, comes from the agreeable warmth of the equatorial waters, and the constant welcomeness of their comparative coolness to those who live on over-hot shores.

In Northern Norway, where the national virtue of

economy is often degraded to a craze, and extends even to the use of house room, Baby frequently spends much of his time in the crudest of crude cradles, hung from a spiral spring in the roof. Or, almost as often, the baby is packed into the merest pretence of a cradle and fastened to one end of a springy pole, whose other end is securely thrust into the wall. Both methods keep Baby in a constant state of gentle undulation, and both keep him well out of the industrious household's way.

Norse babies are swaddled very much as papooses are. In the extreme north, where the Norwegians have many Eskimo-like customs, and in the mountains such baby-bundles are often embedded in the snow while their parents are at church. A fairly deep hole is dug in the churchyard. Baby is laid in and buried. An aperture for breathing is carefully contrived, and Baby sleeps snug and warm among his long-sleeping kindred, while the mother and father within the church endure most trying cold. Often the men's fur coats and beards are hung with the icicles of their frozen breath when they come out to dig up their rosy, steaming babies from among their stiff and pulseless forbears. The babes crow and glow as they are carried home to Sunday dinner. The dead sleep on; unmoved by the fever-heat of life, unmoved by the cruel cold of Norway's winter. And the jangled bells in the wooden church cry through the nipping, frosty air a thin, staccato "Amen"—an impotent blessing upon the living and the dead.

The Norse women are industrious of course, but they economise their industry and discipline their children. Many a Norwegian child always wears heelless stockings, or stockings with heels of leather. There 's a valuable tip!

All the girls and most of the boys can crochet elaborately. The Norse mother has twenty contrivances for the industrial filling of every idle moment of her children's. And crochet can be caught up and put down a dozen times a day, if necessary.

Among the poorer and the thriftier the boys wear their father's old clothes in the frankest way. Beautiful is the resultant picture. Coats, shirts, and jackets must be altered more or less. But trousers are invariably altered less. A draw-string is run into the band, which is so gathered about the boy's waist. Then the two legs are cut off at the bottom and hemmed. That's all. It economises labour, and gives the urchin's legs lots of room to grow in—in breadth.

The girls can as a rule all sew and spin and weave; the boys learn to garden, to make sleds and tubs and many other useful things of wood and rushes.

All Norse children have sleds: a few of them for play alone; most have them for work and play.

So many other animals take their ease standing that it is perhaps strange that we should be surprised, as we always are, when we meet human creatures that do so. We have heard, from travellers whose word we cannot question, of the strange Central African tribe whose young and adult sleep standing stork-like on one leg. The Norwegians stand at their meals very often indeed. Long running is far less fatiguing to most human legs than is long standing. But a Norse child will stand for hours at the dinner-table. For the Norwegians do not subsist upon snacks. They eat regularly and voraciously.

There is no people from whose good example we might not learn some things of real utility were our minds but

as free from prejudice as humanity is diversified. I have known no people who did not, in some one particular at least, better us in its treatment of its children. The Norse have one rule which it is impossible to overpraise. You must shake hands with a Norse baby; you must neither kiss nor handle it. That's a wise rule, a kind rule, a clean rule. We sin less than many other nations in this respect; but even among us the promiscuous kissing and fondling of children is pernicious, unwholesome, and indecent.

Norse parents are unflinching disciplinarians. But in Norway, as in all other countries where they are subjected to much discipline, the children have appointed days of great licence.

Every child expects a birthday cake: a generous mass of sweet bread, fine with flowers and sugar and rich with citron and almonds and saffron. And most children count upon a "coffee party" on their name-day. On Christmas Eve the children may run wild, and they like. And on *Fastilevn* (the first Monday in Lent) they have an absolute carnival of frolic and of unrestraint. On *Fastilevn* a Norse child may eat as many sweet cakes and buns as it elects, and it may thrash its mother. More, it is given a whip with which to administer the castigation. It is a long birch or willow spray heavy with decorations of paper, of ribbon, and of tinsel. The child may ply it unchecked until the last shred of ornament has fallen off the *Fastilevn ris.* This unique privilege is understood to compensate the child for twelve months of whippings—just and unjust—and to erase from the youngster's mind all bitterness and humiliation. Not an unmitigatedly bad idea!

CHAPTER VIII.

PAPOOSE.

"You came when winds unleashed were snarling,
Behind the frost-bound hours,
A snow-bird sturdier than the starling,
A storm-bird fledged for showers,
That spring might smile to find you, darling,
First born of all the flowers."

OF the many millions of children in North America, less than three hundred thousand are in an accurate sense American. The woolly-headed, rolly-poly pickaninny darkies are the children of Africa, and the fair-faced children of Canada and the United States are the children of Europe. Even the Eskimo children who squat upon their fur-floored huts and suck blubber are the children of the polar North rather than the children of America. But the Indian children, the children of the forest the boys who bend their supple bows of ashwood, and fly their oaken arrows into the heart of the deer, the boys who race the fleet wind, the girls who sit at the wigwam doors and weave odd baskets of scented grass and thread inartistic bead-work, they are the children of America.

The aboriginals of America—the so-called Indians—are probably of as great antiquity as any extant race. The Indians themselves seem to have changed very little from

their remote forefathers. But their circumstances have changed most deplorably, cramping and brutalising them sadly. But the Indian children show this—as of course they feel it—least of all the Indians. In the North American Indian children of to-day we may see a fairly accurate picture of the native children of the North America of long ago. All American Indian children have four things in common: long, straight, coarse, black hair, and polysynthetic speech, a love and knowledge of nature, and simple modes of life.

The American Indians are called "redskins," but they are not all that, nor even the majority. The large proportion of the Indians are cinnamon coloured; some tribes are almost, if not absolutely, white; some are almost, if not absolutely, black. But every Indian has long, coarse, straight, black hair. To that rule there is no exception. The girls let their hair hang about their shoulders in lank, graceless masses, or they braid it with strings of brilliant beads and threads of scented grass. The boys crown theirs with coronets of sweet grass, and with the plumes of the first mighty birds that fall to their arrows. When the Indian boy kills his first eagle, or slays his first deer, then there is great rejoicing in the wigwams and the huts. If the boy is a chief's son, and has killed his game young and well, they have a feast. The guests are bidden by

> "Messengers with wands of willow,
> As a sign of invitation,
> As a token of the feasting."

The feasts of different tribes differ materially and in manner. If the tribe is a superior one, they eat out of

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earthen vessels, eat with horn spoons. The bison horn makes the best spoons. They eat the flesh of wild goose, and cakes of yellow corn-meal; they eat pemmican, and pike, and sturgeon, venison, and wild river rice, and roots and berries. They wash all down with brook water. It is brought by the women of the tribe in dippers made of birch-bark, and they drink it out of bowls of bass-wood. And they have music at their feasts: there is song and sound of drum and flute and rattle. There is dancing—such weird dancing! when the braves squat about the camp fires and smoke their calumets, or peace-pipes. The children of the tribe sit at their fathers' feet and are very happy, and the boy for whom the feast is given is very proud. He is almost a man now, soon he may go to war. Then he may wear the warrior's plumes above his brow, and take a squaw.

There ought to be buffalo steak and hump of bison at every such Indian feast. But, alas! there are no more buffaloes—civilisation has exterminated them.

The Indians who have a wild, rugged, semi-civilisation of their own—a picturesque, if primitive, life-method of their own—are growing fewer and fewer, and the Indians who have nothing but degradation are growing more and more numerous.

Indian mothers carry their papooses on their backs as they did two hundred years and more ago. I used in my girlhood to be among the North American Indians a good deal. I scarcely remember ever hearing a papoose cry. They are very comfortable in the bark, box-like cradles into which they are so firmly strapped. The Indians, with all their faults, are very devoted to their children, and a papoose is very rarely hungry. Then it

is always going, going. Its mother is a busy, hard-working creature. She is the feminine personification of perpetual motion, and so the baby on her back is always on the move. Well fed, amply clad, and always on the go! What more could any baby ask? The accompanying illustration furnishes a very fair sample of Ute babyhood. The Utes are one of the least admirable of the North American Indian tribes, and yet this looks a wholesome, lovable little fellow. This mother and child are very average Ute Indians, less picturesque than they would have been two centuries ago, for then their garments would have been of fur and skin and more graceful, less severe of outline; but, physically, they are but little changed from their remote ancestors. Their lives may be far less happy, but their bodies are the same, and the papoose does his miles and miles of daily travel just in the way his great grandfather travelled. An Indian squaw will walk twenty miles and only stop to feed her papoose and unbind his legs.

The Indian child in learning to speak learns to describe. He calls a squirrel "Tail-in-air"; he calls the fungus on the tree-trunks "dead-man's-moccasin-leather"; he calls the bees "honey-makers"; he calls a European "Pale-face," and he calls a clergyman "the prayer-chief"; he calls Lake Superior "Big-Sea-Water"; he calls a doctor "Medicine-man." But in all the word-pictures that his little tongue learns, none are prettier than his descriptive names for the months. April he calls "Moon-of-bright-nights"; May he calls "Moon-of-leaves"; June he calls "Moon-of-strawberries"; September he calls "Moon-of-the-falling-leaves"; November he calls "Moon-of-snow-shoes."

The Indian boy is taught to hunt, to fish, to trap, to wield the tomahawk and the war hatchet, to build canoes of birch-bark, to make his bow of ash, to string it with the sinews of the reindeer or with strips of deer-skin, to fashion arrows from oak, to tip them with jasper or sharpened stone, and to wing them wisely with feathers. The girls are taught to form boxes and cradles from bark, and make moccasins and garments from skins; to plant corn and husk it; to tend cattle; and to weave boxes, mats, and baskets of flags and rushes, of willows and strong grasses. They learn to do strange things with beads, and to stain with the blood of berries the quills of the birds their brothers shoot. Those quills they fasten in crude designs upon birch-bark boxes. They use them for head-dresses and for belts. Their coarse brown fingers grow very skilful in the arranging of *wampum*. *Wampum* (beads made from shells) is on every Indian gala dress. Above all, the Indian women are taught to bear and forbear.

It is almost impossible to teach an Indian child what it is not his nature to learn. But what his ancestors have done for untold generations he can learn to perfection. He can lie for hours holding his ear to the hollow ground, he can lie so quietly that you and I could never detect by sight or hearing that he breathed. He can dance in wonderful fashion in the lurid, grotesque light of the camp fires, waving about him his fan of turkey feathers. He can dance in his snow-shoes—dance upon the snowcrust. He can prick with a thorn his strange picture-language on the smooth tree bark. He knows the habits and the haunts of every wild thing in forest and in river. And in his own Indian way he has an accurate knowledge of

astronomy. The Indian boy is well versed in the religion of his tribe. All the American Indian religions are astrological. Some tribes worship the moon, some worship the stars, but more worship the sun, and a few worship sun, moon, and stars. An old Indian said of the sun, "He diffuses warmth and nourishment for us and our animals; why shall we not worship him?" Every Indian child is taught to worship one or more of the celestial bodies. And what the Indian boy is taught the man never forgets.

The Indian children are born of a race noble, rugged, imaginative, and staunch by nature, but a race that has suffered much from confinement and civilisation, a race to which we can give little, which we can teach nothing, but which we have robbed of almost everything that made life to it worth the living.

It is commonly said that the American Indians are slowly becoming exterminated. But statistics seem to prove the contrary, and that there are at least as many Indians in America to-day as there were in 1600.

In the western of the United States the Indians are allowed to ride free on most of the railways. But they must ride on the platforms or on the roofs of the carriages. It is not at all uncommon for an Indian woman to ride on the top of a car, sitting quite unprotected from the broiling sun. She will ride so for a hundred miles or more, and with her papoose on her back! I remonstrated once with such a mother because she had her baby swathed in furs; and it was in July, on the plains. "You will kill Papoose," I cried. But she shook her stolid head. She had no intention of killing her papoose. But she knew what I did not: she knew that what seemed to me a

wicked amount of clothing would keep July heat out and keep her baby comparatively cool.

In their rigid adherence to the law of the survival of the fittest the Spartans of old plunged their new-born infants into icy water, and the Apache Indians, taking the just born papoose from the arms of its mother, lay it outside the wigwam that it may pass the first night of its life unsheltered, unsuccoured, unsuckled, and untended, and by its survival, if it survives this early ordeal, prove its fitness to live one of a tribe whose every member is a warrior or the mother of warriors. The American Indians are a wonderful people. No one knows who they are or whence they came. Their racial origin is one of the few unsolved —and seemingly unsolvable—problems of our all-knowing century. They almost cover, though sparsely, the Western Hemisphere. Their tents stretch from Mexico to Labrador, from Alaska to Cape Horn. But whatever the tribe, wherever their encampment, the method of rearing the young is Spartan, and their education a long succession of ordeals. The Indians are unlike all other peoples, and they all bear a marked resemblance to each other, and have very many identical customs.

Among the more migratory nations the birth of a child is allowed to delay the march but little or not at all, unless the expectant mother be the very favourite wife of a chief. Ordinarily, the squaw quietly leaves the line of march, having given whatever bundles she was carrying to other women or placed them upon the sledges of the dogs, goes to the nearest stream or brook, and ensconces herself upon its grassy side. Papoose is born. The squaw bathes herself and her babe, hastens after the steadily moving tribe, and is received with a grunt of congratulation or

approval. She is rarely absent from the line of march over five hours, and I have known her return inside of two.

In every tribe Papoose is lashed to its cradle for at least six months. These cradles are straight, stiff boards, usually with a hood of skin or bark. The child is very tightly fastened to the board, its back and its legs firmly bound down, and only its arms and its neck free. This sounds and looks very cruel, but it ensures sound lungs, straight legs, and straight backs, and I dare say indirectly promotes longevity. At all events, it is well adapted to the Indian woman's mode of life. She must do much (though not all) of the menial work of the camp—"women's work that is never done"—dwell she at the North Pole or the South or the Equator, and she has little time to spare for Baby. The cradle is suspended on the mother's back, from her head or her shoulders, by means of a stout strap. They are back to back, the mother and child, in most tribes, and so Papoose shares every moment of his mother's busy day, but never seeing her work, never interrupting it. I have seen many a papoose fast asleep, and in almost a horizontal position, too, while his mother dug roots or bulbs or hoed maize. Often Papoose has a very elaborate cradle embroidered, with quills and feathers, inlaid with shell and bits of fur and bark, and the edge of the hood a perfect pandemonium of dangling beads, birds' wings, and savage trinkets, that the occupant may stretch forth his hands and play and amuse himself as he rides about upon his ever-patient, ever-moving mother's back, and so have less temptation to distract her attention from her all-important work to his unimportant self. In most tribes Baby is not taken from his cradle when given the breast.

Baby is often unbound for an hour or two that he may stretch and kick his legs, and he is always well fed. Many Indian squaws suckle their children until they are four years old or more. It is a common thing to see three or four cradles propped up against the trunks of trees, or the side of the wigwam, while the mothers rest or go about some work for which back must be free as well as arms. I once saw a fine fat fellow quite alone and happy as a king, in a cradle stuck bolt upright in the spongy ground in the mossy outskirts of a Californian forest.

The tribe had marched on, and his mother had gone to the brook. When she rejoined her people she had a papoose in her arms, and my plump friend on her back. We were in a broad-seated buggy, and offered her a "lift" on the floor, but she shook her head, drew her blanket closer about her, grunted, and plodded on. But she accepted a coin and two or three cigars that my father offered her, and condescended to nod quite cordially when I held out a gay neckerchief, at which her baby —her elder baby—clutched without the least display of dignified Indian indifference; and she grunted out a civil, though guttural, "Thank you, pale-face papoose," as she passed on into the shadow of the Big Mariposa Trees.

On the chance that someone does not know the word with which I was familiar before I could walk, let me translate "papoose." It means baby, or child, and was common to all of the few tribes I have known. The languages of the various tribes differ remarkably, but they are all picture-tongues, or highly descriptive languages. They join several words to make one, which literally describes the object.

Among the Flat Heads, the tender heads of the babies are bound between two boards, and gradually squeezed until they are permanently deformed into the revolting misshape which is the acme of the tribal standard of beauty, and their black but fish-like eyes have every appearance of being just about to pop out of their heads. And yet the Flat Heads grow up no more deficient in intelligence and reasoning ability than many other tribes.

Probably the Indians are called "redskins" because of their general use of red paints upon their bodies, for there is little or no natural red tinge upon them. They differ in colour, but all are more or less cinnamon hued, and their skins are but little affected by climate or weather. The portions of their persons which they cover are never lighter than the constantly exposed parts, and no Indian baby is ever born white, as is common in even the darkest of the Caucasian races. Among the Mandans, indeed (the tribe is extinct, as are many others), almost every tenth child was born blue-eyed, white-skinned, and silver-haired, but neither skin, hair, nor eyes ever darkened.

In a few tribes the deformed children are destroyed. Well, didn't the Spartans do that too? And the practice, if ever justifiable, is so among a people who have little or no possibility of caring for the chronically sick or misshapen, and where existence itself is vitally dependent upon soundness, sturdiness, and dexterity of body and of limb. When I first began to study Grecian history, I was amazed to learn of many customs that reminded me of the customs of the tent-dwellers of my native West.

Among the Blackfeet a child is not named until it is six or seven, and though this tribe is exceptionally late in naming its young, among all the tribes the proper names are, or are meant to be, descriptive. Many of them are changed in adult life if found to be misnomers. Many of them are very beautiful. I am writing quite from memory, and the tents of the red man are far, far behind me, but here are a few of many names that I recall, either in Indian or translated into English: O Kee-We-Me, Pure Fountain, Smiling Moonlight, The Sweet-Scented Grass, The Blue-Breasted Pigeon, Na-Ni-Sa, The Buck's Wife, and The Bending Willow were girls; Whirling Thunder, Roman Nose, The Walking Rain, Wascamonia, Big Elk, Blister Feet, Decorie, White Cloud, and Wa-ta-we-bu-ka-na were boys.

From babyhood pure and simple, until the time comes to learn "to do what they need to do while they live"—as the Indians term education—the little ones toddle about, play with the thousand and three dogs that belong to every camp, and follow in the march on their own sturdy legs, or upon the backs, or in the arms, of their mothers. The education of both boys and girls begins very early and is a very serious affair. The conditions of Indian existence are such that the maintenance of life and the very retention of life are daily so dependent upon the Indian's exact knowledge of what to do under all probable circumstances, and upon his ability to do it exactly, that it is natural enough that the education of Indian children should be as it is—superlatively thorough. The boys are taught so much that is interesting, and in a way so interesting that I shall dwell upon it further on. But to clear the way for this engrossing

subject, let us peep now at what the little Indian girl is taught, and at the dwellings in which both boys and girls live. Game is the chief food of almost every Indian tribe, but all, save the most hopelessly improvident, plant pumpkins, beans, maize, etc., as a resource against famine. All this crude gardening is done by the women, and its different details form one of the first lessons taught the girls of the tribe.

The women make and ornament their own robes and blankets and those of their husbands. All this the little girl is taught, and many an Indian maiden of almost tender years can embroider and paint with real skill the battles and triumphs of her father and her brothers upon robes and rugs of snowy doeskin. Most Indian women wear many ornaments, more or less of their own fashioning. They have trinkets of tinsel and silver for their ears. They have wristbands and necklets of elk's teeth, and profuse strings of *wampum*. They prize these *wampum* strings above all their other possessions, because they attest the wearer's skill, muscle, and patience. Each girl must make her own, and the manufacture is very difficult. The *wampum* is made from fresh-water shells, and these, also, each girl must gather for herself.

The Indian girls are taught to put up and take down the wigwams—for that is women's work—to make and embroider moccasins, to cook, to clean, and to carry burdens, to walk incredible distances, to be brave, and to be quiet. They learn to perform well their allotted part in the war-dance—among most tribes the one ceremonial dance in which they are allowed to participate. They become skilled in the game of the plater; of the

very many Indian games, the only one I know that is played exclusively by women; a picturesque game not unlike dice, and played with bowls, a pillow, and gaily-painted pieces of wood. They learn to ride, in most tribes, for when they move, a woman rides the horse that carries the wigwam, herself carrying a pack, and probably a child or two. The women and children come forth from the camp to meet the returning hunters, and girls are taught by their mothers to unload the men and horses, and to skin and quarter the game, which is always done by women, and, for reasons of sanitation, at some distance from the village.

The Indian boy is taught to hunt, to build, to fight, and to manufacture the necessary impedimenta of Indian life, and to be exact and skilful in the observance of etiquette and ceremonial. His education is almost equally divided between the science of doing useful things and the art of doing effective and impressive things. It would be nice work to discriminate whether more time and more gravity are expended upon the branch useful or upon the branch ornamental. Good, adequate workmanship, and elaborate accomplishments are the two great aims of education among all the American Indians, and the streams often mingle intimately and flow together between the same banks, both in the education of the boy and the life of the man; and this is equally true of Indian girlhood and womanhood.

Above everything, the Indian boy is taught to endure, to suffer with indifference—real if possible, assumed if necessary. This is the quintessence of Indian thought, of Indian life, of the Indian character, of Indian existence, tangible and spiritual, external and internal, mental, moral,

and physical. The moment we forget this, and allow any detail of Indian life, howsoever minute, howsoever seemingly frivolous, impulsive, or unbridled, to become in our minds dissociated from this, the verity of verities of all things Indian, we lose the Indian spirit, cease to be *en rapport* with the subject of our thought, and our mental fingers will delineate but a poor picture of Indian life, false in outline, crooked and blurred in perspective, and insincere in colour. The trend of all Indian thought and all Indian education is toward stoicism.

The second most positive and sentient element in the Indian character is love and veneration of ceremonial and ornament, ornament of dwelling, ornament of garment, ornament of utensils, of tools, of weapons, and, above all, ornament of speech, manner, and action, and social observance.

The little Indian boy is taught to hunt. What he hunts, and how he hunts is determined by the tribe into which he is born—by its customs and traditions, and by the territory in which that tribe lives, over which it wanders, and by the character and variety of game found there. In almost every tribe the boy is taught to fish, to shoot, and to trap. Among the Root Diggers he is chiefly taught to club. The Root Diggers are a dwarf-like tribe. They live among the rocks and crags, and never venture on to open ground. They have no horses, and their boys are never taught to ride; but they are never overtaken and conquered by even the fleetest and most powerful of the horsemen tribes, for no horseman can pick his way or find foot-room among the slabs and stones among which the Root Diggers always dwell, living upon the roots, for

which they dig and burrow, and upon the small game —rabbits, pheasants, prairie chickens, etc.—which they kill with thick short clubs, thrown with wonderful skill. The boys of almost every tribe are deft marksmen with gun and with arrow, and are skilled fishermen. They spear the great salmon as it flashes among the foaming whirlpools and the minor rapids of the St. Lawrence; and from the shores of Mexico they cast their fine-meshed nets for leaping schools of silver sardines, and throw their mollusc-baited lines to tempt numberless varieties of fish, rainbow-hued of fin and savoury to the taste. They learn to hunt the deer, gliding noiselessly in their swift, delicate birch-bark canoes along the cool Canadian rivers. They hunt this timid prey by night—a dark night for choice; but Indians can see in the dark almost as well as owls can. When their keen sight or keener scent discovers the whereabouts of an elk or deer, they flash a sudden fierce light full upon him, and long before he can gather up his wits and run he lifts his pretty feet and bends his proud antlers in the convulsion of his death agony, for the hunter's bullet has pierced his brain, or his arrow found his heart.

The Indian boy learns to trap the ermine or to spear the seal, if he and they are at all neighbours. He learns to carry upon his back the game he has killed, and to throw it down some little distance from the encampment wigwams. The women and children (the girls and younger boys) will be waiting there, and will divide and dress it, taking the valuable portions home with them, and leaving the refuse at this wise distance from their dwellings. Such is the sanitary rule in every well-conditioned tribe. In the large majority of the tribes

horsemanship is highly valued as an adjunct of war, but even more as an adjunct of the chase; and the boys, at least, are taught to ride at a very tender age, and taught to ride wonderfully well. The Sioux or the Dacotahs are the most powerful of the North American tribes, and possibly the most wonderful equestrians of the world—or, rather, were so when the tribe was in its prime. Among the Commanches the boy is taught to hang upon the side of his horse and ride so at fullest speed, for he must ride thus on the battlefield when he is a brave.

The boys of many tribes (in both Americas) are taught to lasso and to tame the wild horse. I had a delightful pony in my girlhood that was broken for me by an Indian, and an Indian only. It was the chummiest little creature imaginable, and as cheerful as a cricket. No Indian ever breaks an animal's spirit—never, above all, a horse's. I knew a tribe of Indians once—or, rather, several families of a tribe—every boy of which was an expert maker of a peculiar hunting whistle, or deer whistle. I forget which tribe it was, but they had pitched their tents among the wild prairie roses of some territory that bordered on what was then the Mormon's paradise — Utah. "Thunderstorm"—he was only ten, and a great playfellow of mine—made me more than one of these strange whistles. It was always about three inches long—sometimes less, never more—and was fashioned from tender sapling bark. Upon it every male of seven or more in the tribe could perfectly counterfeit a young fawn's bleat. Each hunter carried such a whistle in his pouch or at his girdle, and when he descried a deer too distant for his aim, he crouched into the long, dense grass, and, raising the treacherous whistle, blew upon it, "Ma, ma."

The distant deer lifted its head, and in a moment moved swiftly to its sure death, but, as it thought, to the succour of some stray fawn.

Every Indian boy is taught to build the dwelling peculiar to his tribe; and in those migratory tribes which invariably take their tents with them, the girls are taught to take the wigwams down, pack them for travel, stack them on the dog-sleds or on the horses, and at the journey's end to unload them and re-erect them. The Indians may be divided conveniently, sensibly, and picturesquely, into skin-builders, grass-builders, bark-builders, dirt-builders, and timber-builders. All Indian dwellings are picturesque, and the study of their erection and ornamentation is sincerely interesting. The majority are circular of foundation. The skeletons of many wigwams look like the framework of Zulu huts, and the wigwams of the grass-builders seem strangely identical with the dwellings of the Kaffirs; and among many tribes in South America, as well as North, the homes of the people are very like the snow houses and ice huts of the Eskimo. The Crows are the master architects of all the Indian nations. Fifty men can sit or stand at ease in a first-class Crow lodge. Forty poles, each between twenty and thirty feet high, and each cut on the windy heights of the Rocky Mountains, form the framework, and are covered with skins dressed as smooth as soft silk, and as white as bleached linen. Fringes of scalp-locks edge the seams and the openings of the tents. Ingenious ornamentations of stained porcupine quills alternate with stranger ornamentations of bead-work and bark. Several facets—perhaps all the facets of the wigwam—are the canvases of strongly drawn and

splendidly coloured pictures. It is a favourite custom in the Crow, and in many other tribes, to portray the Great Spirit on one side of the tent, and the Evil Spirit on another. The Dacotahs almost always have their "gods drawn and quartered" on the curtains of their tents. And several other nations paint their tribal gods upon the canvas of their wigwams.

The Indian boy's military training begins almost as soon as he leaves his mother's breast. Much of that training is purely ceremonial, but much of it is utilitarian to a degree. Many of the details of this training differ in the different tribes, but many details are common to all tribes. Keen and far sight is not only a gift, but a profession with all Indians. The boys of almost all the tribes are taught to throw the tomahawk with a dexterity, a length, and sureness of aim that no white man can emulate.

They are invariably taught to make the war-whistle, which every chief carries. Each chief must make his own; and though every Indian boy is not destined to become a chief, he learns to make the whistle, on the off chance. First of all he must kill a wild turkey, then from its leg bone he must fashion a whistle about seven inches long, on which two vastly different sounds can be made, according to which end is blown upon; but both sounds so shrill and penetrating that they pierce through the thickest whooping of Indian battle. One end of the little bone whistles out, "Advance!" the other end cries, "Retreat!" Such a whistle hangs from the neck of every chief, and every warrior knows perfectly its two sounds and their meaning.

Every Indian boy is taught to write and to read

their wonderful sign language, which, in many tribes, is strangely Egyptian in character. Every boy is taught the various ceremonial dances, to "make his medicine," to "smoke his shield," to sing "the death song," and to do a hundred other things, either useful or observant, or both. They are uniquely interesting many of them, and their story would furnish matter for many such volumes as this, if adequately told.

Let me assure you that the Indian is never an idle boy. He learns, and learns eagerly, to do all that is essential to Indian welfare. He learns from the great book of Nature —to read it, to remember it, to use it.

Indian children swim almost from their birth. Fish are scarcely more at home in the water than "redskins" are. An Indian woman coming to a stream that she wishes to cross never thinks of unstrapping the baby from her back. In they plunge, over they go—squaw and papoose and cradle and all. As like as not half a dozen little Indians follow in irregular procession, for all the world like a brood of brown ducklings in the wake of their mother duck.

The two great events of an Indian youth's life are "making his medicine," and "smoking his shield."

When a boy is between fourteen and fifteen he wanders away from his father's lodge, and does not return for two or three days. Sometimes he remains away five or six days. He is said to be "making his medicine." No one follows him or appears to notice his departure. He roams on until he finds some peculiarly secluded spot—distant, dark, and dismal. There he lies down, perhaps under the gloomy shadows of the grim pine trees, perhaps at the edge of some black, salt pool, where the sunshine never reaches, and only the wild deer come to lap, perhaps in

the sombre deep of the strange forests that border the Orinoco, where chattering, grinning monkeys, with their quaint babies on their backs, spring from tree to tree, or leap among the rope-like cordage of the thick vines and creepers that stretch from trunk to trunk. Perhaps he keeps his solitary watch and makes his mystic medicine in the shadow of some great captive iceberg. But whether near the North Pole or the South, he lies upon the ground, cries ceaselessly to the Great Spirit, and fasts. At last exhausted nature moans "Hold! enough," and the worn-out boy sleeps. The first member of the animal kingdom of which he dreams he believes to be his lifelong protector, appointed by the Great Spirit. Man alone is barred out; and from reptile, bird, or animal, whatever he has first dreamed of, must his medicine be made. As he only knows of the existence, or, at least, of the appearance of such animal life as he has seen, the beast, bird, or snake indicated, though often difficult, is never impossible of capture. When he wakes he returns to his wigwam. His kindred gather about him, and he recounts his dream minutely. No one speaks to him, but they listen intently, and when his tale is told they give him food and drink. When his thirst is quenched, his hunger satisfied, he again turns from the lodge, to which he must not return until he has found and killed the creature destined to be his medicine. He dries and preserves the skin entire, ornamenting it according to his own taste, but as elaborately and fantastically as possible. It may be the skin of a polar bear, of a war eagle, of a rat, of an ape, of an alligator, or of a long-tailed monkey, or of anything else that has animal life in the Western Hemisphere, except man alone. But the Great Spirit is a kind

god, and rarely dictates a very large animal, for the "medicine bag" must be carried through life. It is his "good luck," his strength in battle, and in death his guardian spirit that is buried with him, and is to be his guide to the beautiful hunting-grounds. No chief, no warrior, no brave, would go into battle without his medicine bag.

An Indian knows no such disgrace as losing his "medicine," no glory equal to the glory of taking the "medicine" of his foe. There is not a man among the nations who would not far rather lay down his life than have his "medicine" taken from him. As for giving it away, no one ever heard of such a thing. I believe that no white man ever succeeded in buying an Indian's medicine, though very many have tried, and several, to my knowledge, have offered beads galore, plus many times the "medicine's" weight in gold. Not even for whisky—whisky by the dozen gallons—will an Indian barter his "medicine bag," and when I say this there is nothing more to be said. We have taught the Indian to drink alcohol, and there is no other thing on the earth, under the earth, or over the earth, for which he craves so much—or that stirs his mad passions so intensely as does "the Pale-face's fire-water." I verily believe that a typical medicine bag is the queerest object ever beheld by mortal eyes. They all differ. They are all bedight with ornaments gruesome and odd. The ingredients of the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth* are not in it with an average "medicine," though very probably half of them are dangling from the sacred skin. I think that I was between six and seven when I first saw a young Indian's medicine. My father, who read the master poet aloud to me long before I could

read *Mother Goose* for myself, had read the fourth act of *Macbeth* to me a few days before, and it struck me at the time that Shakespeare must have known some Indians, and all about their "medicine bags," and I 've by no means forsworn my childish faith, for the years have taught me as they went that, for all his inexactness, his inaccuracies, his mistakes, Shakespeare did indeed know everything. I was allowed to handle this particular "medicine"—a rare privilege—but my father was not, nor could he buy it. It was a splendidly horrible specimen, and belonged to one of the famous chiefs, "Rain in the Face," I think, or was it "Last Horse," or another? It is a long time ago, and I 'm not at all sure whose it was, but how it looked I remember perfectly. When the lad has made his medicine he returns home. He is received with acclamations and rejoicings. His father gives a feast, and probably a "glad dance." The Indians worship their medicine with ceremony and with fervour.

An Indian is old enough to go to war when he is sixteen, but first he must have a shield. He must make it himself, or it will not protect him. He must kill with his own hand the buffalo bull, or other male animal from the skin of which the shield is to be made. He must himself take off the hide, which must be thick. In many tribes he must slay the beast with an arrow, and an arrow only. The following description was written by a man who lived many years among the Indians, speaking their language, living their life, almost thinking their thoughts, and who was many times an eye-witness of "smoking the shield"; and the ceremony has in no way changed since he witnessed it :—

"In the great Commanchee village in 1836, I was invited

to go and see the 'Smoking of a Shield.' An immense crowd was assembled a little out of the village, within which a circle of a hundred feet or more in diameter was preserved by a line marked on the ground. In the centre of this circle a young man had dug a hole in the ground, and in it stretched horizontally, a little elevated above the surface, the bit of bull's hide of which he was to make his shield, tightly strained by a great many pins driven into the ground, with a fire burning in the excavation underneath; while the glue extracted from the buffalo's hoofs, and spread over the skin, was frying and roasting with it, to give it the hardness and stiffness required.

"To witness this ceremony, which they call 'smoking (or roasting) the shield,' in order to ensure its success, and legitimately to publish its owner's change from the phase of boyhood to that of warrior, all the warriors of the village had assembled, at his invitation, in full war-dress and war-paint, with their shields on their arms, who formed in rings within, and danced in circles around the roasting shield; and each one passed it brandishing his war-club, his tomahawk, and shield over it, vaunting forth the wonderful efficacy of his own, and invoking the 'fire spirit' to give strength and hardness enough to that of the young warrior to guard and protect him from the weapons of his enemies. His shield finished, he was a brave, a soldier, and this ceremony his enlistment, nothing more. He can go to war now, and when he takes a scalp he becomes a warrior."

Among his earliest lessons an Indian boy is taught how to die; to meet death calmly and stoically. Every Indian boy is taught the "Death Song." The words differ in the different tribes, but their meaning and the custom are identical in all tribes. It is sung the night before death

by an Indian condemned to death, or about to take his own life. The Indians never dissuade, much less prevent, a would-be suicide. The condemned (self-condemned or tribe-condemned) spends the last night of his life singing to the Great Spirit, and ceases not to sing until he dies. And since every child that is born may live to be a suicide or a criminal, he is carefully drilled in the "Death Song"—as every well-born youth in Japan was, until recent years, carefully instructed in all the details of Hari Kari.

The most exquisite thing I know about the Indians, perhaps the most exquisite thing I know about any people, is the way in which the squaws wear mourning when their children die.

No finite heart can gauge what its parents feel when a little child dies. No finite pen should attempt to draw comparison between the soul anguish of race and race. But the Indians, for all their reserve and stolidity, feel and suffer deeply and keenly. Their nepotism is intense. And I am convinced that when death takes an Indian child its parents grieve as sharply, as sincerely, and longer, than do the average parents in the world's entirety.

It is not uncommon to see in Mexico or in Canada a pair of elaborate tiny moccasins above a tiny Indian grave. A mother's fingers have made the moccasins; a mother's hand has hung them there to help a baby's little feet over the long, rough road that stretches between his father's wigwam and "the Great Chief's Happy Hunting-Grounds."

It was within the sound of the Yosemite's liquid music that I first saw a squaw with an empty cradle on her back. The Indians believe that a baby's spirit cannot reach the

spirit land until the child, living, would have been old enough and strong enough to walk. Until that time the tender spirit hovers about its mother. And often it grows tired—oh! very tired. So the bereaved mother carries Papoose's cradle on her back that the baby spirit may ride and rest when it will. The cradle is filled with softest feathers; for spirits rest most comfortably upon feathers, hard things bruise them; and all Papoose's old toys dangle from its hood, for dead Papoose may like to play even as living Papoose did. On the tangled bank of a babbling, laughing brook that was flowing to the dear old Swanee River I once saw an Indian squaw (almost a child herself) sit nursing an empty cradle. She was crooning to it an Indian lullaby, and her cheeks were very wet. I went away unseen. But I have remembered her and the look upon her face when long years after I have stood beside an empty cradle or bent over a baby's open grave.

Milton, with characteristic omniscience, congratulated his babe upon its death. And even Shelley, the big, the human, breathed a note of resignation in the hymn of grief he wrote to his dead boy. But the Indian mother—as she sat by the brook-side and sang and wept over her empty cradle—if she prayed at all, prayed the prayer of the old Persian: "God's forgiveness give and take."

CHAPTER IX.

FRENCH CHILDREN.

"Have you seen but a bright lily grow
Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you marked but the fall o' the snow
Before the soil has smutched it?
Have you felt the wool of beaver?
Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt o' the bud o' the brier?
Of the nard in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white, O so soft, O so sweet is she!"

IN a wonderfully interesting article, "About French Children," in the *Century Magazine* of October, 1896 Madame Bentzon uses this very French and very beautiful phrase, "To keep and protect the impatient wing that is growing."

Ah, that is the whole spirit of French maternity and paternity: to keep and protect the impatient wing that is growing! "Mes enfants!" were words often and often on the lips of the so nearly childless Napoleon. "Mes enfants!" It is a term used by all France as one of supreme and tender endearment.

In many ways French home-life is ideal. In no other nation are parents so solicitous and so careful, daily, hourly, of their children's welfare. In no nation are children more respectful, more obedient to their parents. In no nation is the intimacy between children and parents more

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complete, more cordial, more tender, or more wisely regulated. The parents watch, and ward, and guide smilingly; and the children smilingly yield themselves to the guardianship and guidance of their parents. They are tractable mites—the wee ones of France—and give little or no trouble, as Eccles would put it, to their "masters and pastors, their mistresses and pastoresses." This is chiefly so, I think, because every French child is born with a passion for *savoir faire.* And what a lovely, lovable passion it is! How easy and delightful it makes life! It veils ugliness and adorns beauty. It softens and sweetens poverty, and makes pain itself almost endurable. French children are anxious to do everything in the most approved way to create a good impression—above all to be *aimable.* There is no translating that word. Our English "amiable" does not touch the dainty hem of the French word's garment. Our amiability too often smirks. Their *aimabilité* is demure and seductive.

Because French children are so desirous of *savoir faire,* to know how to do, they are docile and easily taught. A well-born French girl of four would rather forego her afternoon's promenade than be seen on the *boulevard* in an ill-tied sash. A Breton maid of six would rather stay home from a "pardon" or fête than go in an ill-laundried cap. I verily believe that a Parisian baby would rather go hungry than drain its bottle of sweetened milk in an inelegant manner. "All of which leads to affectation and vanity and insincerity," say you, O English reader? Perhaps! But there are worse things than affectation and vanity; worse things even than insincerity, at least so I venture to think—I, who emphatically think the Anglo-Celt the most admirable race in Europe.

And it leads to other things, this racial tendency; it leads to a cheerfulness, a gentleness, to a softness—yes, and to a kindness of speech and of gesture, of glance and of manner, that are as refreshing as champagne, and (with me, at least) never leave a bad taste. I honestly believe that the good manners of the French, more than its own loveliness, make France the most delightful country in Europe to travel in, and that those manners go much further to make Paris, perhaps, the most beautiful and quite the most charming city on the Continent, than do any or all of the landscape and architectural beauties that Nature and Napoleon have heaped upon the "Queen of the Seine."

Perhaps the children of France do smack somewhat of affectation and of over-carefulness of manner; even so, I for one cannot regard, what is so indisputably a national virtue, as a national vice. I regret that French children, especially the children of Paris, are not in some respects more childlike. I rejoice, and I am grateful, as a citizen of the world and a nomad, that the French "grown-ups" are so polite, so charming, and so considerate.

The children of Paris differ in many ways from the other children of France. They have somewhat more freedom. Their clothes are very much borrowed from the United States, and their morals, their games, and their education somewhat from England. But before glancing at these and other peculiarities of Parisian children, some words more about the traits that are common to all French children, whether of the capital or the farm.

All French children are fond of animals, peculiarly so of dogs. Almost every child of well-to-do people will have a well-combed and curled and beribboned French poodle for

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a chum, and the children of the poor almost always have dogs of some nondescript sort for companions and playmates-in-chief. No child could wish for a more faithful, a less selfish, a more intelligent comrade than a well-bred French poodle. I know several who live in the Faubourg St. Germain. They are all highly educated, and as elegantly mannered as any dwellers in that most aristocratic of quarters.

Children are loved all over the world, and I believe they are equally loved in most quarters of the globe. But the nations differ greatly in the amount of fuss they make over their babies. French children are not greatly *en evidence*, never obnoxiously so, except among the very poor. No French child is ever allowed at the family table until the child can behave and eat with absolute propriety. No French child is allowed to leave uneaten any morsel that it has allowed to be put upon its plate. To do that is the worst of bad manners in France, be your age what it may or may not. French mothers have assured me, and the author of the delightful article I have quoted says also, that their children were so taught, not from that economy which is so characteristic of the French, but because to leave a portion of food on your plate is to say "The food is not so good as it looked. I cannot eat so much of it as I thought I could." So the little French ones are taught at their own tables to consume all they have accepted, lest in after years when "dining out" they should be guilty of the enormity of leaving something on their plates.

France — and, above France, Paris — has been for centuries the supreme source of Occidental fashions. And yet France has always borrowed from other nations her fashions for children. "Look at the paintings and

engravings of the seventeenth century," says Madame Bentzon, "and see the little creatures, who as soon as they gave up their plumed bourrelets (padded head-protectors) and long tulle aprons over a blue or pink dress, against which a jewel hung instead of a teething ring, had to wear uncomfortable costumes, the miniature reproductions of their parents' clothes. Little girls particularly were put into whale-boned bodices and sumptuous robes, which necessitated lessons in deportment to be properly worn; and consequently the dancing master was one of the first professors employed. It needed the revolution of simplicity, brought about by the influence of Jean Jacques Rousseau, before children could be comfortably clothed—girls in muslin slips and heelless shoes, boys in short jackets borrowed from the English style. (Ah yes, but borrowed a long way off!) Ever since then we have followed English fashions for our children, and now America lays down the law with its blouses, its quilted, somewhat oldish winter coats reaching to the ankles, its pretty Puritan caps trimmed with fur, a thousand times preferable to the immense caricature-like bonnets copied after Kate Greenaway."

French children are less shy than English children; more shy than American children. In many ways they seem a soft, agile, alert, vivacious, well-controlled, and self-controlled blend of the two. They are quicker than English children, more sedate than American children; socially more precocious, morally and physically less precocious than either. One of the chief aims of French home-life and of French school-life is to keep the innocent bloom of childhood unrubbed for many years, until the girl marries, until the boy is introduced into life and

society by his father. By innocence the French mean absolute ignorance. I record this; I do not applaud it.

French boys and girls see but little of each other after they are eight; almost nothing informally. The girls play with their dolls and their housewifely toys—dishes, furniture, etc. The boys play soldiers, and with toy soldiers. To become a French soldier is the highest ambition of a French boy. To become a happy and successful wife, a happy, shrewd, and competent mother, is the highest and best ambition of a French girl.

The children of Paris are more cosmopolitan, less insularly French than are the other children of France. But the same is so of any accessible capital and great city in which travellers greatly congregate.

After Baby is born, named, and registered, comes the day of his baptism. In Paris that is a simple function; in the country an elaborate. The little citizen has not, in all probability, gone out-of-doors before it is carried, in the most elaborate of robes, to its baptismal church. The ceremony is that of all Catholic countries. (Strangely enough in atheistical France almost every child is baptised.) The family gather round the font. In Paris all that follows is the sending of some dainty French sweets in dainty French boxes to acquaintances, and the presenting of some gifts by the godfather. One gift he makes to the godmother, one to the mother; and to the baby he gives a silver spoon, a silver fork, and a silver mug. In France, as in Cuba, to be a godfather is not quite a sinecure.

France is the land of wet nurses; Paris the city of babies artificially reared. That seems to me one of the deplorable things about French childhood; as another indisputable

fact seems the great glory of that childhood. This other fact is that every French mother trains her daughter to please and study that daughter's future husband.

French country life is a life of simplicity—a life of almost clock-like regularity. In Paris, life is a fever of the unexpected: mood follows mood, incident tumbles over incident. All the world and his wife and their children are on the *qui-vive.* In Paris, life seethes. In the country, life flows slowly, brightened by the momentary ripples of a dance or a fête day, but never disturbed at bottom, never at all hurried in its onward course. To those born in the country, or in the villages, life soon becomes a straight, jog-trot sort of thing; a merry jog-trot, but still a jog-trot, and it grows slower and ever slower as it nears its end. To those born in Paris, life soon becomes a rushing whirl; a whirl from which no one can escape, a whirl that grows ever madder, more exacting, more complicated.

But the Paris baby gets a far quieter, less complicated, less red-taped start in life than does the baby of the French country. To begin with, the Paris baby is more comfortably clad; it gets registered more easily; and it is christened with far less fuss and feathers than is the country-born baby.

All French babies are very tightly clad, but there is a very great difference between the straight-jacket closeness of the rural swaddling clothes and the easier swaddling clothes of the capital. All French babies are bound into bundles in a way that almost reminds me of the papooses of our North American Indians. Like those Indians, the French believe that binding the baby makes it straight and strong of back and limb in after life. I am inclined

to think that it does among the Indians, and that it does not among the French. But it certainly makes Baby a droll, sweet parcel to look at, and the easiest of living, breathing things to handle.

Before a French baby is twenty-four hours old a formal notice of its birth must be sent to the office of the mayor. There is in all France no village so small that it lacks a mayor, no mayor but boasts an office. France is the hot-bed, the flourishing garden of red-tapeism, of officialism, of fuss and fume, and formal feathers. A mayor and a mayor's office (and both within easy reach) are absolute necessities of French existence. A Frenchman can neither be born nor die without official cognisance and assistance. And between those two ends of life—the first and the last, the cradle and the grave—a Frenchman can scarcely turn round without official supervision. I have said that leading-strings were abolished in France. I am wrong. French babies no longer stagger about with harness on their backs, and firmly held reins to check their indiscreet footsteps. But there are leading-strings in France, complicated leading-strings of red tape, and no French citizen ever takes a step without them. Soon after the notice of a birth has been given, the municipal physician calls upon Baby to satisfy himself that the child's sex has not been misstated. A few hours later the father (he must have at least two witnesses with him) calls at the mayor's office and fills in a most important document—the certificate of Baby's birth and of Baby's names. I call the document important because there is so little that the French citizen can do without it. He must produce it when he wishes to marry; he can neither enter school, nor the Church, nor the army, nor be buried without it.

French babes are usually named after saints. The exceptions to this rule are made almost exclusively in the naming of Paris-born babies.

In France, as in most Roman Catholic countries, it is customary for babies to wear only white and pale blue—the colours of Mary, the mother of Jesus. All babies are placed under her protection (by the way, all Chinese babies are placed under the protection of a goddess called "Mother"), and more often than not the infant is consecrated (by a vow taken by its parents or its godparents) to the wearing of the Virgin's colours. Most often the vow is for one or two years, but girls are often sworn to wear them much longer. I have a French friend who never wore one inch of other colour till she was ten years of age. This is a distinct survival of an old pagan custom.

Perhaps the greatest joy of a small Parisian is to have a well-placed chair in front of the booth in the Champs Elysées of some famous Punch and Judy showman. Paris children never tire of this, for all French children love the play and are natural actors—especially the Parisians. All French children dance and love to masquerade—again, especially the Paris children. During the carnival week all well-to-do French little ones are very dissipated; they go to fancy-dress balls, and enjoy their small selves to the top of their bent. Such fancy-dress balls in Paris are among the prettiest and the saddest of my memories—the little things are so polished, so accomplished, so graceful, so charming, so mature, so premature.

For one thing (a thing of which I wish I might speak at length, but may not), I most heartily, most emphatically,

commend French mothers. They train and educate their daughters (every girl in France is so taught, drilled, and trained) to please their future husbands. In no other Occidental country is such a custom so universal, so systematic, so thorough. I congratulate the mothers of France. I congratulate the daughters. French women realise that marriage is the best and the chief end of woman's existence. I am not speaking of maternity (and I yield to no one in my love of little children, my joy in motherhood), but of marriage, the ideal friendship, the ideal association between man and woman. Realising that marriage is the one thing, above all other things, to be desired for their girls, French mothers, from the moment those girls are born, begin to educate them for marriage. How very wise! How admirable! There is no profession open to women so difficult in many ways, so easy to blunder in, and, once having blundered, so hard to retrieve the blunder in, as marriage; and yet we let our girls plunge into it without one poor rag of preparation. What mother would think of sending her daughter out, quite untrained, to maintain herself by her needle, or by cooking? yet we send our girls absolutely untrained into marriage, to earn or lose their life's happiness, to sink beneath the black waters of the most cruel of human miseries, or to swim to the shore of life's brightest happiness. It would not be one whit more cruel to fling those same girls into the deep Atlantic, without so much as a lifebelt, when they had never learned to swim.

The conditions of nineteenth-century Occidental life are such that many women are obliged to live alone and to earn their own daily bread. To be able to do so

adequately, and as a matter of course, more and more girls are being educated year by year. I do not deplore this; it is both wise and just. What I deplore, and deplore emphatically, is that any girl should be taught dressmaking, typewriting, shorthand, architecture, journalism (or any other one of a thousand secondary things), before she is taught anything about marriage. It is a daily mistake of ours. The French very rarely make it. This is a subject upon which I feel warmly and mean to speak warmly. I have, I think, some right to speak. I know something of the thing of which I speak. I have had more or less success in two professions. I have earned my living on the stage and with my pen. I have earned it in Europe and America, in Asia and Australasia. I could, if necessary, entirely support myself and my children. I know how nice it is to have money, above all how nice it is to have money that one has one's self earned. I think I know the insides and outsides of the question. I am convinced that home (it may be a stationary palace, it may be an ambulatory tent) and marriage are woman's great need, her great birthright, her great happiness.

I do not believe that all the lifelong triumphs of any woman artist are worth one hour of her happiness as a wife. What was Elizabeth Barrett Browning's art compared to her womanhood? I believe that the woman is unfortunate and unblessed to whom work—be it drudgery or great art achievements—is aught but subsidiary, a rug to wrap about Love's feet. I do not believe that any woman was ever really happy, or ever truly great, who lived by herself and for herself. I do not believe that any woman ever did really great work unless she did it under

the shadow of a man's influence, or in the sunshine of a man's affection. Feeling all this, and feeling it keenly, I can but feel that the mothers of Paris, in one great essential, excel all the mothers of the West. In Paris, even more than in the rest of France, girls are educated for marriage.

The art of living with others is the art in which I would have children drilled and taught above and before everything else. Its highest branch is the art of living all day long with another. It is an art every French mother teaches, every French daughter learns.

Paris is a paradise of toys. There is a shop in the Rue de Rivoli that tempts me more than any other shop in all this world. I buy toys for my children there whenever we are in Paris. My father used to buy me toys there almost a quarter of a century ago.

The children of Paris are gaily clad for the most part. They are bright in word, and glance, and laugh. They dance, they sing; and yet I never spend a day in Paris without thinking painfully of two little French boys who lived there in splendour, and died in supreme misery. Both were heirs to the French throne. Both were descended from the Cæsars. Both were ardently looked for, wildly welcomed, and almost uniquely unfortunate. I never look upon the Tuileries without thinking of the son of the Austrian Archduchess, Marie Antoinette, and the son of the Austrian Archduchess Marie Louise.

The peasantry is the backbone of France. The rough-handed, little-educated people who till the soil, sow the crops and reap them, are the sinews and marrow of the

great, and in many ways admirable, nation of which Paris and the Parisians are the paste and glittering ornaments—ornaments effective, but not essential, not broadly typical, and (as far as things French can lack in taste) not always in the best taste. We all know Paris. Few of us know much of really rural France. Because of this we are very apt to, not only under-estimate, but, what is far worse, altogether mis-estimate, France and the French people. France has her Moulin Rouge. Yes, but she also has her Pasteurs. And the fine, tireless scientist, great of brain, steady of hand, and clean of life, is far more typically French than is the red-lit windmill of folly. And when all is said and done, the Moulin Rouge, the extravagant Parisian side of French existence, has something very cosmopolitan about it. Its clientele at least is surprisingly cosmopolitan, just as the patrons of the tea-houses in the Japanese treaty ports are largely European. Every metropolis is greatly cosmopolitan; Paris is very much so. It is very Frenchy, but it is not altogether French. It is the Frenchiest and the least French city in France. It is outside of Paris that we must look for the children who are in the best and most just sense typically French—the children who are reared as Pasteur was reared, watched over, trained and educated by firm, vigilant, and most self-sacrificing parents. If we would learn something of the French people, we must turn to the patient plodders of the nation, the people who toil indefatigably and calmly in the fields, the fisheries, the poultry yards, the laundries, the dairies, and the laboratories of France. The children who are most essentially French are not the belaced and beribboned little ones of Paris, but the simply clad children of the country, the

earnest, industrious children of an earnest, industrious people.

A French peasant child is narrow-minded almost always; shallow-minded almost never. He is as a rule, that has not even the proving exception, ignorant. To be "more plain and homely in my drift," he knows a great deal about the things that are around him, and he knows less than nothing about the things that he never sees—that never come into practical touch with his own life. The baby peasant of France knows every flower that grows, every bee that hums upon his peasant father's farm; of the flora, the insect life, the social economy, of any other part or parcel of the world he does not even think. There are countries outside France, there are classes and farms beside those of his ken, that he knows indefinitely and believes in contemptuously, but they do not in the least interest him.

The children of the French peasantry imbibe an incredible quantity of cider. It is sour, sharp stuff, the cider of the French country folk—a beverage of the possibility of which an American cider mill never—no, not in its most acidulated moments—dreamed. But it must be as harmless as it is vigorous, for the French peasant children thrive upon it—upon it and hard work. As soon as a peasant child can walk, it can, and must, and does work. But it drinks cider before it either works or walks. Go into the rural parts of northern France next summer and watch the sturdy peasant mothers working in the yellowing fields. Beneath a clump of trees that shade one small stretch of the field's edge, you will find a flourishing village of baskets. In each basket you will find a baby, strapped. Each baby will be

sucking a bottle, and each bottle will be more or less full of cider.

French peasant children have grace and tact more than commensurate with their almost phenomenal industry and endurance. The French and the Japanese have one great and peculiar gift in common. They have the gift of touch. The phrase is not a current one, but I can think of no other that at all expresses the chief and the common characteristic of the French and the Japanese peoples. In France and in Japan you will find among the children of the soil a *savoir faire*, a refinement of hospitality and of courtesy that you will find nowhere else.

There is in all this world no sadder sight than that of orphaned children—children orphaned by neglect, by desertion, or by death. The saddest—yes, I think quite the saddest—sight I ever saw, I saw less than a year ago in a French village. The houses seemed empty, and they were. The fathers were away toiling in the vineyards, or drinking in the inns. The mothers were in Paris, nursing, and often suckling, the children of mothers who, God forgive them! had something more enjoyable to do than to nourish and cherish their own young. The peasant women who had deserted their own children—their nursing children!—were no doubt sleek and fine in Paris, or in some château home of wealth, hugging to their false breasts the fine-frocked but neglected babies of the unnatural rich. And the peasant children left behind! I shall never forget them as I saw them. They had crept out of their cheerless, motherless homes, and were playing in the mud and dust of their native streets, making or pretending to make merry, in the yellow, French sunshine—and each brave, oh! so sadly brave,

in the cast-off finery of some *frère de lait*. *Frère de lait* is the intimate title by which any French child may accost another if they have both been nursed by the same mother. Which is to be more pitied, the Parisian baby who lives upon alien and plebeian sustenance, or the little peasant who knows not the sight of its mother's face, the sound of its mother's voice, and when it is thirsty and lonely turns to its bottle of cider?

I have more than once been accused of exaggeration when I have spoken to French friends of the suffering entailed upon the peasant children whose mothers go to Paris wet nursing. I am quite sure that I understate the case. It is a subject upon which I feel so sharply that I always try to put it mildly.

A French prelate of some eminence assured me last summer that the temporarily deserted peasant children gained far more than they lost. "Their mothers are able to secure them otherwise unobtainable plenty for years—the years during which growing children most need good nourishment and suitable clothing.

"And there is almost invariably some careful grandmother, or widowed aunt, or elder sister, to mother most wisely the little brood." So said monseigneur, but his experience has not been mine. Perhaps we have studied different parts of France.

Madame Bentzon writes of her own country, which she evidently loves deeply, with an impartiality and a candour that are wonderful in any author, and, in a woman, all but phenomenal, and that are as convincing as they are rare. Here is her testimony:—

"There is nothing more aristocratic, and at the bottom more inhuman, than the institution of the hired wet nurse.

Institution is the correct word, as the office for nurses is under official management, and controlled by the Board of Public Charities; but this does not prevent private undertakings of the same nature. The peasant woman who wishes to make a business of nursing comes to town with her infant, and goes to one of these offices. Her employer pays for the forsaken baby's journey home.

"As to what becomes of the nurse's family during her absence—in order to appreciate it one must visit the poorest part of Morvan, where this peculiar profession is principally carried on. When one sees the squads of superb, buxom Burgundian peasants on the Champs Elysées, adorned with dazzling white aprons, crowned with brilliant ribbons, dragging their long cloaks in the dust, one little dreams what they have left behind them: a sordid hovel, where, while the father drinks more and more in the public-house to forget his loneliness, the neglected children crawl about, not only dirty and unwashed, but ridiculously tricked out in old Parisian finery, belonging once to their foster-brothers (*frères de lait*), and which they wear even in tatters, hind side before, and upside down, the 'looped and windowed raggedness' of former magnificence—the worst of all!"

I can never determine whether the more to like or the more to dislike Jean Jacques Rousseau. I can't quite convince myself to rate him as highly as James Russell Lowell does, but I like to over and over again linger upon all that he did and all that he tried to do for children—especially for French children. He struck with sharp weapons at the roots of artificiality; not the artificiality that refines and makes gracious and graceful, but the artificiality that corrodes and rots all that is best in

personal character or in national life. For I maintain that there are two distinct artificialities, one as beneficent as the other is baneful. Both artificialities thrive rankly upon the French soil and in the French atmosphere. We must always honour Rousseau, above all else, for his splendid crusade against the criminality of needless weaning.

The children of the French shopkeepers seem peculiarly healthy and strong of limb. Perhaps this is somewhat the result of the system, which is almost universal among the French tradespeople, of sending their children out to nurse, sending them into the wholesome farm life of rural France. Perhaps it is, in part at least, because of this that the French children, even of the most hopelessly prosaic of all prosaic classes—the tradesmen class—love nature, and underneath all their unavoidable French artificiality, are sweetly natural. Perhaps it is somewhat because of this that many of the French farm children have a manner that could "grace a court."

Industry, cleanliness, and temperance are the three first laws of French peasant life. A peasant babe who can only just walk will keep itself clean, sip, not drink, life's pleasures and life's woes, and find itself some form of industry. The French peasant child is born to believe, and does believe, a numberless number of things so fantastic, so illogical, that we should lack words to express our contempt did we find an Oriental child accepting such absurdities—things so preposterous that at them we might well shake our national sides in laughter, did we not pause to remember the absurdities of our own national superstitions.

Every peasant child knows that soup made of red wine (a little stronger than *vin ordinaire*) and melted candles

will cure a cold. Every peasant child knows that there is a prayer that will cure measles, a prayer that will allay the whooping-cough, a prayer that will set a broken limb, a prayer that will wipe off freckles, a prayer that will permanently sweeten a sour temper. Almost every peasant child knows one or two such prayers, and on fit occasion repeats them devoutly, though in doggerel and in *patois*.

I shall never forget a little bright-eyed girl of seven who tried to teach me a ridiculous rhyme, which was, so she said, a sure cure for the earache. Who shall say that the little French peasant girl's faith did not cure my pain? Not I.

The French peasant children have forms of prayer to drive devils and foul spirits away, that are almost phrase for phrase like the prayers that devout Chinese children chant to frighten away the evil spirits that they call "Angel-devils."

Until a peasant baby is baptised, no one asks or mentions its sex. To do so would be both discourteous and sacrilegious, for the good peasant folk believe that until the babe is baptised it is not human, is but an animal, and has no sex. The French peasant's knowledge of zoology and of botany is limited—very limited.

"France is a mixture of a little gunpowder with a good deal of sand; if all were gunpowder the country would explode all over, but the sand prevents it."

A great many clever people are busy year in and year out saying clever things. None of those people often succeed in saying anything more clever or half so true as the above remark of Hamerton's. The children of the French peasantry are placid, slow to fire, slow to move.

They are sure and safe, but they are not often quick. Unlike all American, and many English children, they are never iconoclastic. What they learn to do they learn to do neatly and thoroughly. But they learn most things slowly. Mental arithmetic seems to come readily even to the densest of them. All French children are surprisingly quick at mental arithmetic. This is, I fancy, very largely attributable to the use in France of the decimal system of numeration—a system in every way preferable to our own.

French children of the humblest birth are cleanly almost beyond the children of any other peasantry. They are neat and clean by instinct, by inherited tendency; they are kept so by the influence of environment, and by education. They live in houses whose human-crowded, but scantily furnished interiors are as clean as hands and unflagging energy can make them. The sturdy pieces of walnut furniture are scrubbed and polished and polished and scrubbed until they shine and shine again. The very flower-pots holding the window-ledge's bright array of crimson flowers are scrubbed to almost snowy cleanness. Even the French *gamins* contrive to look clean. The peasant children that you meet in the lanes, or see working in the fields, are never really dirty, and if you meet them on Sunday, or on a fête-day, or at a market, you cannot fail to notice how crisp and exquisitely clean both they and their clothes are. This may be somewhat because of the purity, the sootlessness, of the French atmosphere, but it is chiefly because those little peasants were born French and of French parents. No Frenchman, no French child, be he ever so destitute, believes that, as Mr. Galton claims, "dirt is necessary for them (the poor) in cold

weather," much less that it is desirable, or that it "is the poor man's undershirt."

French children, if not less brave than Anglo-Saxon children, certainly seem to be in many ways less plucky than English children, and most certainly are less venturesome than American youngsters.

An English boy is foolhardy by instinct. An American boy thinks himself a little hero—a distinguished citizen—if, when playing, he rips his garments into rags. A French boy would think it indecent, disobedient, and altogether out of the question to so tear his clothes and disclose his legs. An English boy plays, romps, and in his keen, hearty play sometimes ruins or injures clothes, but altogether without thinking about them. To be frank, I like the English boy best of all boys. I say this because I like to say it, and not because I live in England, and am writing for English readers. I like English boys best of all boys, but I think that they would be even more likeable than they are if to all their admirable characteristics they added some of the admirable characteristics of French boys. I should like them to add French courtesy —French veneer, if you like—to English strength and force. I believe in courtesy.

"What does it mean? what does it amount to?" demands a blunt friend. My friend, I drove for four hours this morning in a bleak, biting wind. My hands and feet turned almost to ice; my nose reminded me painfully of its presence, it stung and smarted; my lips were cracked and rough. I came home to an enthusiastic wood fire, a pair of soft slippers, and on my dressing-table there stood a pot of cold cream. What did the fire, the slippers, and the cold cream mean? what did they amount to?

They meant that life was endurable; they amounted to a degree of comfort and alleviation that made me glad that I had gone out, and glad that I had come back. And that is just what courtesy means, just what it amounts to. It does not mean that you and I like each other, but it does mean that we shall behave decently to each other, and it amounts to this: we shall both be enabled to endure life in the same world. There is a great deal of the gentleman about the veriest French peasant; and the dullest, roughest of the peasant children do not altogether lack that exquisite courtesy—good breeding—which is the crowning charm of the children of the *noblesse.*

Courtesy is life's great lubricator, and what perfume is to flowers, good breeding and gentle behaviour are to children. I know of nothing more objectionable than an affected child; it is even worse than a rude child. But how much more endurable is the child who affects courtesy than the child who affects pertness. Most children like to pose—a deplorable thing, but true. If a child will pose, for reason's sake let it pose in the right direction. If it must assume something, let it assume something desirable, admirable. Let it assume courtesy until, through assuming courtesy, it becomes really courteous, as the fakirs of India through assuming deformity become deformed. The methods are similar, but the result will, in the case of the child, be as pleasing as it is, in the case of the fakir, disgusting. But I believe that, as a rule, the courtesy of a French child is genuine, instinctive, not affected. There is nothing more admirable than a genuine child who is also nice. Our English boys would be even more adorable than they are if they could

absorb (I say and mean "absorb," not "add") into their Anglo-Saxon sturdy honesty a moiety more of Gallic suavity. But am I not wishing to paint the lily, and add perfume to the rose of boyhood? On second thoughts I should rather hesitate about altering our boys of the upper class. But I emphatically wish that the children of our peasantry were as well-behaved, as pleasant to meet, as French peasant children are.

To return to the subject of courage. Frankly I think that French boys lack every-day courage more than English and American boys do. No semi-sensible and at all educated person can doubt that all the French have exceptional courage in emergencies. I think the boy who shrinks from unnecessary danger far more manly than the boy who does a daring thing to "show off," or for the sake of proving to himself how brave he is.

The boys of the French peasantry are not greatly addicted to running away to sea, etc., but they are brave lads for all that. They come of the same stock as did the men who died during the retreat from Moscow, and dying cried "Vive l'Empereur!"

There are even some "mighty hunters" among the French peasant boys. Many of them are expert and brave in the tracking and slaying of wolves. In the rural parts of France wolves are, and always have been, so numerous that for centuries a price has been set upon their heads. There is a regular custom, a function and institution, for their extermination, or at least the slaughter of as many of them as possible—a function called *Louviterie*. Before the Revolution the *Louviterie* was indeed a pageant. Since then it has dwindled sadly, but it is still a vital custom, and many a peasant boy,

serving as one of its acolytes or pages, gives unmistakable proof of his genuine bravery and earns many a welcome franc.

I have grave doubts about how much French peasant children believe, how much outside of the unbelievable. We all cling more staunchly to our ridiculous superstitions than we do to our more or less rational convictions. I know a little French peasant maid who eats snails to cure her home-sickness, but I have seen her very frivolous at Mass.

I have no doubt about the French peasant child's love of beauty and of nature.

Have you ever in rural France seen a "Rogation"? Have you ever watched the peasant girls preparing for it? A Rogation is an ambulatory Mass or sacred service. The priest and his attendant carry the Host from grove to grove, from field to field, and pause to celebrate it, and to pray at the appointed spots where the devout peasants have erected temporary shrines. It is the peasant girls who do the most to rear the temples of boughs and blossoms. It is they who go from farm to farm, from village house to village house, and borrow each prized vase, each cherished scarf, to decorate the altar of "Our Lady." It is those same slim, brown fingers—the fingers of the peasant girls—that for that altar's decking twine and twist the delicate French wild flowers, twine and twist them with a perfection of taste which has never been reached even by the greatest of French modistes.

All French children are most thoroughly taught the vast importance of detail and the great significance of trifles. This is, perhaps, the most admirable of the many

admirable phases of the French system of the upbringing of children.

It would be almost impossible to exaggerate the devotedness of French parents of the middle and the upper classes. There is absolutely no other nation on earth whose parents place their time so unlimitedly and so unselfishly at the use (not at the disposal) of their children. The self-sacrifice of French mothers is beyond all description. Their humdrum daily doing of what they consider their duty is beyond all praise. A French girl above the peasant class is scarcely ever out of her mother's sight except when closely cloistered in some convent school. And each year fewer and fewer girls, even among the *haut noblesse*, are sent to the convents, and for far briefer periods. I think this greatly to be regretted. Nowhere else in the Occdient can fine repose, fine distinction, and fine charm of manner be so perfectly seen and acquired as in the first French convents.

The typical French mother is with her daughter all the time until that daughter marries. She superintends her toilet, shares and directs her pastimes, and goes with her to her daily *cours*. A French *cour* is a cross between a class and a lecture (as we understand the word), and is unlike both. The French mother and daughter are inseparable. They live with and on each other. This is, I think, deplorable. It narrows the daughter and makes her parasitical. It petrifies the mother and makes her arrogant and petty. But the self-sacrifice of both parent and child and the purity and excellence of the mother's aim are quite beyond compare.

No other mother regards her maternal duty so seriously,

nor performs it so conscientiously as does the French mother.

French families are small, and are growing smaller. The Government deplores this, and does its utmost to change it. But French individuals are prudent, and will not assume responsibilities that they cannot adequately meet. Of course, the country whose population is on the decrease rather than on the increase must, sooner or later, get distanced in the great struggle for international supremacy. But is it not well on the whole for humanity that the balance of racial power should be now and again readjusted?

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CHAPTER X.

THE ABORIGINAL CHILDREN OF AUSTRALASIA.

"Baby, see the flowers!
Baby sees
Fairer things than these.
. . . . . .
"Baby, hear the birds!
Baby knows
Better songs than those.
. . . . . .
"Baby, see the moon!
Baby's eyes
Laugh to watch it rise,
Answering light with love and night with noon.
"Baby, hear the sea!
Baby's face
Takes a graver grace,
Touched with wonder
What the sound may be.
"Baby, see the star!
Baby's hand
Opens, warm and bland,
Calm in claim of all things fair that are."

CIVILISATION, and the rarity of Christian charity on the part of the conquering Europeans, have all but exterminated the native peoples of Australasia, excepting only the Maoris of New Zealand. The Maoris too are probably dying out, but they have far outlived the many other natives.

This survival of the Maoris is a pointed argument in

favour of the theory of the survival of the fittest. They are a beautiful race, shapely of limb, regal of carriage, quick and able of mind, alert and lovely of eye, deep and musical of voice. They are in the most marked contrast to the other Australasian races, the races which they have outlived. The black aboriginals of Tasmania and of Australia belong to the lowest strata of the great human family. Living in a land of sunshine, of plenty, and of lavish beauty, they were less repulsive in many of their habits than are certain of the North American Indians, the Eskimo, and other dwellers in less-favoured climes; but I am inclined to think that their intellectual average was lower than that of any other contemporaneous race. Two of the races on the Australian mainland neither knew nor could be taught to count above five. Their grip on life was insecure because of their mental inferiority, and when they came in contact with white men who could reason—when they fell under the influence of the conditions of life created by those dominant white men—they went down in one great unresisting mass, as a field of young grain goes down before a swarm of locusts.

When we went to Australia, some ten or eleven years ago, I planned to learn something about the aborigines—learn it at first hand. I never did—not for lack of time, for we lived there for over three years, but for lack of aborigines. There were so few—practically none.

I had one or two old servants, Australian born and bred, and I met many old settlers who told me tales of the natives—tales more or less reliable and more or less interesting. And I found literature, if not very abundant, yet very readable, about the blacks. But come into touch with those blacks I could not. The few that were left

were scattered thinly, very thinly, over the continent and the islands, and they were living in conditions of no ethnological significance, conditions scarcely reminiscent even of their earlier manners and customs. Had I spent a longer time in New Zealand, I might, doubtless, have learned much more about the Maoris; but my stay there was brief. In Tasmania the native race is absolutely extinct. It was in Queensland, and in Queensland only, that I saw a little, a very little, something of the natives of the Australian mainland.

It was in Brisbane that I made the acquaintance of the most unmitigatedly objectionable old person I have ever met, or ever hope to meet. She was blacker than any hat. Her English vocabulary was scant, but uniquely foul. She never greeted me save with a threatening grunt and an imperative demand for tobacco. She wore as few clothes as the law allowed, and in her most sober and impecunious moments she condescended to scrub the verandah floors of a house in which I was a frequent guest. Under no circumstances did she ever work two days in succession, or treat any living thing civilly. She could by no effort count the small wage she so slouchingly and so sullenly earned, and always vehemently protested that she was underpaid. Not a nice handmaiden! But the eternal servant question was burning and acute in Queensland, and our friends were glad when the wretched jin turned up to do a day's rough work.

She had two little grandsons. They seemed harmless enough, but they were indescribably stupid. Even the gift of a coin scarcely brightened them up into anything like the rightful loveliness of childhood. I tried to teach them that a silver sixpence out-valued a copper penny.

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I failed! They could neither understand nor believe it. They liked the sickly sweet sugar-candy I often gave them, but only one of them, and he only once, ever showed the slightest sign of liking me. The one occasion of his gratitude (if it was gratitude) came nearer an exhibition of intelligence than any other thing I ever knew him to do. I had a nasty headache one morning, and lay in a hammock comforting myself as best I could with shade and *eau de Cologne*. Presently I felt something pull at my frock. I opened my eyes. Little black Dromoora stood grinning at me. He pointed to my head, then touched his own and shook it. Then he thrust a great ripe pineapple into the hammock, clapped a piece of sticky bark on my forehead and fled. The moist bark did ease the pain. The pine he had stolen was the pride of the gardener's heart, and was being treasured for our Christmas dinner, and Dromoora knew it.

In the old days when the Queensland blacks were a living nation, and not the miserably surviving dregs of a dead and dying race, they laid the greatest emphasis upon their games. Their sham fights and their corroborrees were prepared and carried through with intense earnestness, the mimic wars were the universal pastime and national game of all the children old enough to walk. The fields of these mimic battles were the schools of the children. The child who best learned the lesson of fighting was commended by the entire tribe, and obeyed by his or her fellows, for both boys and girls were taught to fight, though in adult life the jins rarely did fight.

While their elders were tasting the weird joys of the fantastic corroborree, the children of the tribe armed themselves with mimic weapons—weapons very cleverly made,

as a rule; and each child was obliged to make its own. These mock weapons were the only toys those children ever had. They made their little shields of strips of bark; they carved their toy weapons out of the hardest of the hard Australian woods, using flints and stones for knives and chisels. Sharp-pointed sticks were their spears. Here is an authentic description of one of those sham fights, written at the time, by a European eye-witness: "These little naked imps darted in and out after one another among the trees, throwing their weapons with determination and wonderfully exact aim, warding off the blows with equal skill, or slipping behind a tree out of the way of a missile. Children as they were, there was no flinching from the contest. The party which proved to be the strongest at length drove the enemy from tree to tree, through a grove of she-oaks, across to an open space, many a hard knock being given, and many a flying stick being cleverly stopped by the strip of bark, right into the middle of the camp, where hostilities ceased. Thus the children of the aborigines systematically train themselves, often under the direction of their elders, for the savage warfare in which it is their ambition to distinguish themselves."

It was not a very happy lot, the lot of childhood among the Queensland blacks. Score upon score of babies were slaughtered by their own mothers every year—indeed, I may almost say every month. If a baby was in the way they dashed its brains out and left the bruised and broken little corpse to the indescribably horrid obsequies performed by the beasts and the bird-beasts of the bush. And babies often were in the way—very often! When the tribe was on the march the women carried everything.

They were the tribes' only beasts of burden. Many a wretched jin flung her child in desperation from her overburdened back. Had she dared to cast away her load of kangaroo flesh, or her heavy dilly-bag, it would have cost her a terrible thrashing, or, like as not, her life. Baby the father was not apt to miss, especially if Baby were a girl! And the children who were let live, lived lives as unpampered as we can well imagine. Did the tribe have a feast, a grand feast of half-raw, half-charred kangaroo meat, or opossum flesh, or roasted snake, the children sat with the jins, behind the men, and ate such refuse portions as the men threw to them, or fasted if those men were very hungry. Small wonder that they were meagre of limb, "pot-bellied," and hopeless of face, those poor little black children.

Three nations dwelling at the utmost distance each from the others, and differing sharply in almost every essential race characteristic, had, in one respect, peculiarly analogous customs. The three nations were the American Indian, the Zulu, and the Queensland aborigines. The customs were those attendant upon the boys' preparation for and arrival at manhood. I have tried to describe, in other chapters, how the American Indian boy "makes his medicine," and how the young Zulu prepares for and proclaims his maturity. Both customs still hold, and a kindred custom held among the black Queenslanders until they ceased to be a nation. The boy wandered away from his people, usually for a month or more, sustaining himself by the chase and the wild bounty of the bush. Upon his return to the tribe, he gave before all the assembled warriors an exhibition of his prowess in games, in dancing, in singing, in leaping through the fire, in

fighting, in feats of skill and of strength. If the warriors approved his efforts, he was proclaimed a man. After that he might wear the proud head-dress made from the beautiful plumage of the white cockatoo, and go to war with the men. He might also take a jin, or more if he liked, and beat her. He might join the corroborrees, and, on great festival nights, paint a white skeleton upon his black body, and dance and shout in the red flare of the camp fires.

Every boy and girl of these aborigines learned to build their rude huts of bark, to dress wounds, to hunt and fish, and to cook in their own savage fashion.

Two things they all learned to do with a nicety that approached very nearly to fine art: they learned to make the handsomest and most luxurious of rugs out of the opossum's beautiful fur, and they learned to track foes and game—performing almost incredible feats of smell, of sight, and of noiseless locomotion. Garments they never learned to make, for garments they never wore.

When a Maori baby is three hours old, it is wrapped up in a mat of leaves and laid under the shadow of some tree. Many tribes expose it so for a few hours only; others for twelve or even fifteen hours. If the baby dies, it is buried with no ceremony and not much care. If it survives, it is taken to its mother's breast and becomes at once a much-considered member of the tribe. In two or three of the tribes, two or three whose customs seem the most interesting, the child is not wrapped in a mat, but is packed in freshly gathered leaves of a tree in whose medicinal virtues the Maoris have great faith. In many tribes the babe is watched and guarded; in others it is left altogether to take its chances. Storm and wild

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animal life may destroy it; but it has nothing beyond neglect to fear from man, friend or foe. For, before it is left alone, it is made "tapu." A carved or painted rod, hung with flax and rags and bones, is stuck in the ground near the babe, and no New Zealander will even approach it, much less harm it.

This much-commented-upon institution of "tapu" was and is, I think, far more of a blessing to the Maoris than we have ever understood. The most unprejudiced explorers have not taken it quite seriously enough. "It comprises all that we would call law, custom, etiquette, prejudice, and superstition, and therefore had its good as well as its bad effects." True! But not the whole truth.

The "tapu" is the wise and universally obeyed game law of Maori-land. A river is tapu when the fish should breed. A field is tapu when the grain is yellowing. A wood is tapu when the wild fruit is ripening, or even when the birds are nesting. In times of most ruthless warfare the tapu gave inviolable sanctuary to age and infancy and to expectant mothers or new-made wives. Whole tribes have been butchered (and have scarcely resented their own massacre) because of some involuntary violation of tapu, so sacred do the Maoris hold it. It has been a great safeguard of Maori girlhood, and, in times of relentless strife, a great pacifier of Maori death agonies.

The Maoris are extremely fond of feasting, but they are careless cooks, and cook less well than many peoples who eat less and think less about eating. Often the half-grown children of the tribe or family are in entire charge of the rude culinary work. Boys and girls do the kitchen work, share and share alike. Their cooking, as in all Polynesia, is an out-of-door function, and of no great regularity. It

always reminded me of an American clam bake. They steam everything. A hole is dug in the ground, perhaps a little more often by the boys than by the girls, if the boys are about. It is lined roughly with stones and moss. Each edible is wrapped thickly in leaves and buried for a few moments in the dank ground, while the oven is heating. A fire of wood and cones is kindled in it, and when the sides are hot the fire is somewhat checked and the packages of food thrust in and covered with water. Then the oven is filled up and left to steam and smoulder. Sometimes the little Maoris are very dainty in their choice of leaves, wrapping each viand in those that will best flavour it, and tearing them, that their juices may escape. But more often the fish and the fowl, the bread-fruit and the sweet potatoes, and a dozen other things are indiscriminately treated to one flavour or to none. This method of cooking is painfully slow, but it is sure and safe. No number of cooks can spoil that cooking, if the food is put in at the psychological moment and the oven hole tightly closed. Moreover, this is quite the most delicious way of cooking several things. For maize it is the perfection of culinary art. Often in the north the fire is built of the sweet cones and twigs of the Kauri pine. It grows, I believe, only in northern New Zealand, this queenly pine, and it has a distinct place in history: for the large demand for it, for masts and spars, led to the colonisation of New Zealand. Good old Captain Cook discovered it.

In South Australia, before the natives were extinct, a native girl was at her birth betrothed to some man, and handed over to him as soon as she became marriageable. The Maoris also sometimes betroth their girl children, but

not often. As a rule a Maori girl marries at fifteen. And even when she is betrothed at a much tenderer age, she has a very distinct voice in the matter. Maori boys often are given their own way: Maori girls almost always.

Potiki is the god of babies, and whatever the other Maori gods lack of tribute and praise, Potiki never lacks worshippers or offerings.

A deformed Maori babe is rare almost to non-existence. The children are all straight and sound of limb and mind, with bright, intelligent faces, and svelt and graceful figures. Often—very often—they are dowered with rare beauty, and the glitter of the New Zealand sunshine is caught in the dark meshes of their hair. It might have been written of them—

> "A beautiful race were they, with baby brows,
> And fair, bright locks,
> And voices like the sound
> Of steps on the crisp snow."

And the language they learn to lisp is as musical as their liquid voices are—

> "Sounding as though it had been writ on satin,
> With syllables that breathe of the Sweet South."

Less written of than tapu, but almost as essential to the old Maori sociology and as characteristic of this interesting people is the custom "muru." European writers have usually defined "muru" as "legal robbery on a large scale." But the definition is insolently loose and defective. For certain crimes of commission and omission a Maori may be punished by a raid of kinsmen or the clansmen of another tribe. The raiders chastise, or pretend to chastise, the delinquent. It is almost always a barefaced pretence.

They feast at his expense (no pretence about that), and when at last they leave, they carry away with them some or all of his portable or movable wealth. The completeness with which they strip him of goods and chattels depends upon the heinousness of his fault. Muru is perhaps most often inflicted in punishment for neglect of children. A Maori child belongs to its mother and to her kinsmen, who hold its father responsible for its welfare. To neglect to inflict muru upon the father of any child who has been even accidentally hurt or injured is to grievously insult both father and son. A challenge is sent well ahead of the visit of vengeance, that the father may prepare a great feast and a sham show of resistance. A frenzied-seeming spear fight ensues. But it is a stringent law that no life must be taken, and the first blood drawn ends the honourable combat. Then all the avengers and the father's kindred sit down with him to a mighty feast, a Maori barbecue. Cattle and pigs have been roasted whole and the other dishes and bowls of mead are in due proportion. In the intervals of the feast the men dance wild war-dances and the women sing most astonishing love-songs.

All Maori children are skilful seamen. They come of a race that—however disputed its origin—has indisputably been from remote ages in the forefront of nautical prowess. They are a daring people always, and most daring in the water. They have always been intrepid voyagers, "in comparison with whom the most noted European navigators of the middle ages were mere coasters. The Polynesian chronicles relate voyages extending from Fiji to Easter Island, from New Zealand to the Hawaiian group, and even to the Antarctic regions. They were

never equalled as voyagers until the sixteenth century, which saw such an extension of nautical enterprise, originating in Europe."

Maori children are frequently tattooed, and the patterns of the barbarous decoration are extremely delicate and not infrequently almost beautiful.

The lives of the children are steeped in a natural beauty of which one cannot speak too extravagantly. The utmost extravagance of words is tame compared to the extravagant beauty and magnificence of New Zealand's scenery, of her trees and vines and flowers, of her ferns, of her foaming water-falls and her multiplicity of swift, clear, cool rivers, in which the Maori children twirl and leap like flying-fish, romping in them half the glorious golden day and leaving them only to rest and sleep a little on the tender, pungent banks.

CHAPTER XI.

ALGERIAN AND OTHER CHILDREN OF THE BARBARY STATES.

"For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

"Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead."

CEYLON and Algeria overflow with flowers and with children. Every flowering plant, tree, vine and shrub, that can live in the tropics, seems to blossom its loveliest and its sweetest in Ceylon. Every race that can live within half a hundred degrees of the Equator seems to have let loose its little children to play and thrive amid the oleanders and the orchids of Algeria. In Ceylon there are children of many races—flowers of even more. In Algeria the child-wealth almost exceeds the flower-wealth. The children of many European and semi-European peoples live in Algiers, and to some extent in the few other large towns of Algeria, but they are little aliens, all of them, and are in no true sense Algerian children.

The children that we may count Algerian are of eight distinct races. Those eight races are the Kabyles or

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Berbers, the Arabs, the Moors, the Jews, the Turks, the Kolougis, the Negroes, and the Mozabites. There is a brilliant bouquet of babies if you like, wee human flowers —red, brown, and olive and yellow, and pink and white, and black and buff.

The Kabyles are the direct descendants of the original inhabitants of Algeria. They live in the mountains. They are lithe of limb, active, industrious, and are skilled in agriculture and horticulture. And in those two industries almost all the Berber children are trained.

The Arabs are many. They are chiefly Bedouins, and, except for background and environment, the lives of the children differ but unessentially from the lives of the other Arab children of whom I have written in another chapter.

The Moors are in many respects the most interesting of Algeria's inhabitants. They dwell in the towns and villages and on the sea-coast.

The Jews and their customs are also full of interest. But the Jews, the Chinese, and the English (three splendid, strong, consistent, well-poised, self-centred peoples) retain their basic characteristics wherever they go, change but little with changing surroundings. And the Jewish children of Algeria differ but little in traits or in customs from the Jewish children of other countries. I hope in the future to write of them all.

The Turks have largely disappeared from Algeria since the conquest of that country by the French. Yet some remain, and their customs and their little ones are uniquely interesting. The Kolougis, who form a large proportion of the inhabitants of the towns, are the descendants of Turkish men, and of native women.

The Mozabites believe that they are the descendants of Moab. Proof of that there is none—none conclusive—and the evidence for and against is more conflicting than equal. One picturesquely coincidental fact I must just mention. The Mozabites are Mohammedans, yet they are excluded from the mosques of Algiers, even as "Moab was excluded from the congregation of the Lord." The Mozabites lived for generations in three of the oases of the Sahara. The Mozabite children are taught to till the soil, and to encourage the growth of the fruits that spring from it; to tend the many camels and the few sheep that are the tribe's only cattle. They are taught to chase the lion, the gazelle, and the ostrich. That chase—that beautifully-varied chase—is the principal amusement, well-nigh the only amusement of the Mozabite boys, except for those rare, but to be remembered occasions, when they are privileged to see the gaudy savage puppet shows in the Algerian coffee shops, or in the Algerian streets. These boys are also well trained in mechanics.

The Mozabite women have more liberty, and enjoy, or suffer, less seclusion than do any other Mohammedan women. The children are free, and privileged commensurately with their mothers. They sit with their elders in the calm evening, telling tales, exchanging gossip, and drinking in the words of the professional story-tellers. Such words are the nectar best loved of the abstinent Mozabites. The Mozabites are nice of manner and peaceful of practice. It has been claimed for them, and by high authority, that among no other people is crime so rare. One pitiful and authentic fact I must record, for I am only trying to tell the truth about all our babies, whether that truth be sad or glad.

Few babies are born to the Negroes of Algeria. Many, proportionately many, are born to the Mozabites. But the Sahara (and much of the country north of it) is so hostile to maternity, to perpetuation of life, vegetable, animal, or human, that, to us, an incredible number of Mozabite women die in childbirth.

The little Negroes give depth of colour and grotesqueness of outline to the warm-hued picture of Algeria's child-life. The Negroes live, in the main, in the seaports. Once they were slaves, the great majority of them, but the French Government does not tolerate slavery, and now they are, legally at least, free. Many of them are voluntary slaves, serving faithfully and fondly their Mohammedan masters. They are Mohammedans themselves, as are all the natural inhabitants of Algeria, except only the Jews. Their ancestors came in the majority from the Soudan, and in the few from Guinea, through Morocco. To an American, accustomed to find a black baby warren in every Southern plantation, the paucity of little Negroes in Algeria is rather mystifying. The climatic and other conditions of Barbary are very unfavourable to the propagation of the Negro, and the race, of which, in the United States, we think thirteen a meagre family, is in Algeria approximately babyless. The Algerian blacks are ugly, thick of lip, coarse of skin, flat and lumpy of nose, hopeless of brow, ridiculous and repellent of hair, and impudent of chin. But yet they escape entire hideousness. They have three great beauties: lovely, loving, pleading eyes; splendid white teeth; and faces that, though muddy of skin and thick and blurred of feature, beam with real kindness and inexhaustible good nature. The Negro children have, in

addition to these, the potent beauty of youth. They are a comfortable, cosy-looking lot, the African Negroes; at least a little American girl thought so, who stood, more years ago than her long-since-grown-up self cares to remember, watching a veritable Punch and Judy show in Algiers. She looked even more at the conglomerate crowd of eager children that were her fellow spectators than she did at the peculiar puppet show, the hero of which was so like and so unlike the English Punch and the Italian Punchinello, who were her acquaintances of long standing. As she looked at the strange group of strange children in whose midst she so strangely stood, she suddenly felt at home, quite at home. She gave the hand in which her hand was safely held—her father's hand—a quick, involuntary little squeeze, and laughed a glad little laugh. She saw a plump group of smutty little blacks, who looked for all the world as if they had grown "amid de sugar cane and corn ob de ole Virginny State."

This African Punch and Judy show, which the little American girl saw—she thinks it was one day, it may have been one night, it was so long ago she can't remember—was, and is, a very popular feature of the Algerian observance of the Ramadan. The Ramadan lasts for thirty days and nights. It is, broadly and truly speaking, the Mohammedan Lent. During the Ramadan the Mohammedans fast rigorously from sunrise to sunset. When the sun slips beneath the line of their vision they plunge into orgies of feasting, of song, of dance, and of frolic. They nightly punctuate their Lent as the Latin Christians *en bloc* preface theirs, with a mad, unrestrained carnival.

I may appropriately say something more of the Ramadan, of which the puppet show is a feature, for all the children of Algeria, save her Jewish little ones, join in it with as much eagerness (though less devoutness, perhaps) as their elders do. The nightly meal of the Ramadan is ample and weird. The Bedouin in his tent of black camel's-hair cloth, the Moor in his marble-lined house of stone, the Kabyle in his mountain-side, mud-built home hold their nightly feast in identical spirit and in fashion as alike as possible. Koskusu is the *pièce de résistance* of the authorised breaking of their holy fast. Kuskusu is a porridge of boiled wheat paste. It is more or less thick with raisins or currants. It is served upon a hot dish, upon the centre of which lies a sizeable piece of butter, which may be, and probably is, rancid, but must be square. Hot milk or fragrant broth is poured over butter, pudding, and all, and the small Algerian Mussulman gorges himself upon it, and finds it exceeding good. A roasted fowl crowns the Kuskusu, where means and circumstances permit. Then roast lamb follows (if possible, of course), and then come fruit and conserves. This last course may be made up of all the fruits of the African tropics. It may consist of a half-handful of dried dates. It will, if possible, be washed down by many cupfuls of thick coffee. If coffee is unobtainable, a mouthful of brackish water from the Bedouin's almost empty water-skin must and will suffice.

In the Algerian cities there are many masquerades during the nights of the Ramadan. And in the Moorish theatres, and sometimes in the streets, the drama of *Gharagus* is performed. Gharagus is at once the Hamlet, the Othello, and the Punch of the Moors. Gharagus hits

and kicks, and is hit and kicked in most Punch-like fashion, and his amatory and marital trials and tribulations throw those of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, and Othello, the Moor of Venice, into a humiliating shade. What Gharagus says, what is said to him, and why he so speaks and is so spoken to, all that is outside the pale of decent English printing. But the grotesque trappings, the lewd jokes, and the impossible antics of Gharagus and his fellow puppets give indescribable delight to the madly mixed audience of children.

Gharagus and the others are only little black shadows or figures, thrown by clever shades upon illuminated oil paper. But, for the nonce, they move all Algerian Mussuldom to laughter and to tears.

The star actor of the Algerian puppet theatre plays but one part, but wears many costumes. He appears in all the gorgeousness of Constantinople. He wears the graceful, flowing draperies of the Arab. He sports the gaudy, heavily-beaded, indescribable, and very limited rags of the jewellery-loving, clothing-hating Negro. He is unlike our unctuous English Punch and the artistic Italian Punchinello in almost every unessential. He is like them both in the one essential; he makes the children laugh, and eases the tension of a national sadness.

Except the children of the Jews all the Algerian little ones are brought up in the Mohammedan faith (nominally always, and usually sincerely), and the large majority of such boy children that live in or near the cities or villages attend the Mohammedan schools.

Before the French occupation there were in Algiers alone more than a hundred of these schools. There are still many of them, and to see them is to see an exceed-

ingly pretty picture of Oriental school life. There are three branches, and three branches only, in the Algerian Mohammedan curriculum. Those three branches are, writing, arithmetic, and the reading of the Koran.

The instruction in writing is both thorough and elaborate. Among all Oriental peoples writing is a fine art, one of the highest of the fine arts, and also something of a science. To-day in the salons of Seöul, of Pekin, of Tokio, of Bangkok, of Teheran, of Kabul, and of Constantinople, you will find the most valued wall decorations to be specimens of beautiful handwriting. Sometimes they are the best utterances of sages and of patriots, crystallised in exquisite calligraphy. In the best rooms, the sitting and reception rooms, of the middle classes you will find instead of cheap prints of the Sistine Madonna and of Leonardo's "Last Supper," reproductions of the written masterpieces that adorn the walls of the rich and the high-born. In the Minister's study at the Chinese Legation at London hang two beautiful, red-backgrounded, black-written specimens of Chinese thought and of Chinese handwriting. On the frames of several of the chairs in the drawing-room of the Persian Legation are written, in skilful inlaying of dark woods, Persian poems: such poems as Omar wrote. All Eastern children are taught to venerate writing—to regard it as an accomplishment and a distinction. They are never for a moment allowed to regard it as we of the West do, as merely a means to an end, a vehicle. So, naturally the masters of the Algerian schools lay great stress upon handwriting, and no small Moor, or Turk, or any other pupil, need hope to take a Mohammedan scholarship, or win his teacher's praise, until he has learned to write with ease, elegance, and exactness.

The instruction in arithmetic is meagre, but the short way it goes, it goes thoroughly enough. And then, too, a little arithmetic goes a long way with the average Oriental. They are all born traders, born mathematicians. Among the delightful friends I have made in travelling was a dear old college professor. He held a mathematical chair in one of our most highly reputed colleges—held it so brilliantly that the boys hung about it like bees about a honey jar. He was a mathematical encyclopædia. He was demonised (as the old Greeks used to be demonised) with the love of his science. He had quadratic equations for breakfast, euclid for lunch, cube-root for dinner, and slept with a treatise on trigonometry for a pillow. He was spending a holiday in Algiers. He went into the native bazaar one morning, and there a small, ten-year-old Moor, who never had gone, and never would go, beyond the rule of three, contrived to cheat him out of quite three farthings. And after his return to the hotel it took my friend the professor half an hour and a whole sheet of note paper to figure it out.

The instruction in the Koran is long and fairly thorough. And the Koran is, in many ways, a liberal education in itself. Indeed most great books are if they are faithfully studied and exhaustively mastered. The Koran is a far more interesting and far less silly book than will be believed by most of the Europeans who have not read it, and by many who have.

There is but one teacher in each school, and there are not often many pupils: eighteen is a goodly average. The fee for tuition is usually from one to two shillings per month.

The Moorish boy finishes his school-life when he is

about thirteen. But he seldom loses or drops the friendship of his one-time teacher. And it is unusual to see the nuptial ceremonies of a Moor unattended by his old schoolmaster. Love is law in most of those picturesque little Algerian schools, and the law is able to work, and work well, because of the small number of boys attendant at each school at any one time.

The scene of an Algerian school is always a very small apartment quite open to the street. It would be cruel to confine the little Africans within doors throughout their long school hours; and they soon learn to be both blind and deaf—with the deafness and sightlessness of indifference—to the outer life and doings of the street. Concentration is second nature with the peoples of the sun, and the schoolboys of Algiers soon learn to think of nothing, while at school, but their tasks in hand. But many passers-by pause to look at the quaint little objects, squatted, cross-legged and bare-footed, upon their mats. Among the boys, in the centre usually, stands the teacher, rod in hand. The rod is his insignia of office. He never uses it. He is kind, almost invariably, and they as invariably docile and diligent. Each pupil has a little wooden table, and a pen cut from a reed. The teacher standing, or sometimes walking about a little, if there is room, dictates sentences from the Koran. As he dictates each boy writes, scratching the sacred sentences into his smooth little table with his sharp little pen. When this part of the lesson is over each boy in turn crawls to the master, bows his head to the ground, and hands up his wooden slate or table. The master commends, or corrects, the boy crawls back to his place, gliding for all the world like some pretty, harmless, rainbow-hued snake. When

each boy's work has been inspected they read aloud and in concert what they have written. Oh, the noise they make! It more than drowns the noises of the busy Algerian streets. And how their little bodies sway as they shout! They are dressed in many colours and in many ways, for often they are the children of several bloods. There may be funnier sights, but I have never seen one, than a small Negro sitting squat among his Turkish and Moorish schoolfellows, and shrieking at his topmost some solemn sentence of the Koran, while his great dull eyes roll ecstatically, displaying whole inches of white, and his fat black body almost twitches itself off its equilibrium as the small black sways in an excess and sympathy of rhythm.

Such schools were once almost the only schools for non-Jewish children of the Algerian cities. But there are many others now; admirable schools, founded and largely supported by the French Government. They are solely for the natives, and are surprisingly popular. "Since the French have no proselytising tendencies, the children of the Jews and Moors, and even of many Arab Marrabouts, attend those schools assiduously. Even the female schools found Mussulman pupils as soon as the parents found that the children were not Christianised, and that no interference was attempted with their religious convictions."

The French have also founded Mussulman colleges in Constantine and in Algiers. These many youths attend eagerly: Moors, rosy and clear and white of face, and wearing coquettish red skull caps upon their strictly shaven (but for one lock) heads; Turks, magnificent in flowing dress, and gay of turban; lean, tall Kabyles, light-skinned, and with long, fair hair, which they never cut;

PEASANT BOYS OF TRIPOLI

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nobly-featured Arabs, eloquent of gesture, clad in shirts of finest muslin, and wearing with a regal air their burnüs of snowy wool, and their turbans of twisted camel's-hair rope; and here and there perhaps, a Negro youth, thick of lip and skull, but ambitious of soul, and with some rich warm vein of talent running through the hard mine of his intellect.

The Kabyles or Berbers dwell in all the coast mountains from Tripoli to Morocco, and are scattered over the corresponding interior. Many of the Berber tribes tattoo a Greek cross on the foreheads of their children above the eyes. In some tribes this practice is restricted to the girl children. This is the reason they give for doing so: "Many, many years back a fair and warlike people came from the north and conquered and plundered Africa; but those of the inhabitants escaped their fury who had painted a cross on their foreheads." This is evidently a popular version of the great Vandal invasion of the fifth century—an invasion that swept over the length and breadth of northern Africa, sowing sturdy, quickly germinating seeds of Christianity even in the remotest of the tropical wildernesses.

The Kabyles are industrious, and train even their wee children to work. They learn to make arms and manufacture gunpowder, to forge and work the base metals, and to coin them. They learn to build the stone houses in which they live—for the Kabyles, unlike the Arabs (for whom many travellers have mistaken them) have fixed dwellings, and seldom leave them. Boys and girls are well trained in agriculture.

Almost all the Kabyles are very poor. Almost all who save anything hide their hoards; a custom common to

the majority of Mohammedan peoples. Many of them, suddenly overtaken by death, die without disclosing the hiding-place of their treasure. Hence many a young Kabyle finds himself unexpectedly heritageless. A lad so placed most frequently seeks and finds work in the cities. He sleeps in the open, eats unleavened bread, drinks water, goes in rags, and in every possible way saves until he has accumulated a hundred boojoos. With a hundred boojoos he can buy a musket, and afford to take a wife. And when a Kabyle has a wife and a gun he is well set up in life, nobly launched into manhood.

The Kabyle boy, as a rule, has one accomplishment, and one only—he plays the strange, weird melodies of his race upon a crude, plaintive wooden whistle, an instrument and a music that remind you somehow of the sad notes of the blind shampooers of Japan.

Among the Kabyles the girls are brought up very much with, and even on an equality with, the boys. And they can look forward to a life of far more freedom and social influence than often falls to the lot of Mohammedan women.

Of all the Algerian children the little Moors are the gentlest of manner and the most highly educated. The young Moor changes his skull cap for a turban after he is fifteen, or oftener when he marries. When he has accomplished the pilgrimage to Mecca he may wind his turban of green stuff.

As the boy grows older he grows slightly darker. The Moor girl will never darken. Her life is a life of seclusion. She lives in shady gardens, in shadier galleries, and in shadiest rooms. The sun never kisses her. She is veiled when she goes abroad. And it is an everyday affair (but

a sight, of course, for feminine eyes only) to see a Moorish grandmother with the brilliant, clear, pink and white skin of a twelve-year-old maiden.

The Moor boys are taught mechanics, and shopkeeping, and farming, in all of which they soon excel. They love music devotedly, and are taught to avoid (and, if possible, detest) wines. This is, of course, one of the moral lessons invariably and most deeply impressed upon the minds of all Mohammedan children, whatever their race, wherever the place of their birth.

The surface of Northern Africa is a network of very many distinct and differing, yet intertangled, and often racially intermixed peoples. As the thriving vines upon a greenhouse rockery meet, tangle, then separate to meet, tangle, and separate again and again, so have the Arabs, the Moors, the Turks, the Mozabites, and a score more of peoples—pushing each their sturdy way over humanly fruitful Africa—encountered, co-resided, co-inhabited (ever receiving new blood, and giving it), then parted to remeet after many years and many miles, and so again and again.

To be ethnologically exact about any North African race—the Jews only excepted, perhaps—were to be painfully learned, and more than painfully verbose. To say where the Negroes end, where the Berbers begin, were to say a great deal, and with more than fine nicety.

In trying to somewhat describe the children of the Barbary States, I have a by no means cut-and-dried task. They are the children of a dozen races, and of the mixed and mixed again offshoots of those races. Then, too, I must perhaps repeat somewhat what I have written before in these pages; for in the Barbary States are considerable numbers of children of races to which I have already

devoted separate chapters. Yet, though the races are germinally the same, they are not on the whole the same. For the Arab of Tunis is not quite the same as the Arab of Algeria; the Negro of Tripolis is not the same as the Negro of the Sahara; and still less is the Turk who dwells, and for some time ruled, upon the site of thrice-ruined Carthage, the same as the Turk who says his five-times-daily prayers within the mosques of Constantinople.

There is, perhaps, no Eastern city that offers so true a picture of Mohammedan life as it was in the middle ages, and before then, as does Tunis. The children of all the aboriginal, semi-aboriginal, and thoroughly acclimated peoples of Tunis are brought up in the strictest and most far-reaching Mohammedanism. To study their childhood is almost to study the childhood of the Prophet himself, or, if not quite that, to study childhood as he planned it and prescribed it. To this rule there is only one vivid exception: the children of the Jews. The Jews form a large portion of the population, and their children are far from the least interesting of those within the walls of Tunis, the boundaries of the Barbary States.

All the children of Barbary are skilled in games of chance, and play draughts and chess, and play them well, from incredibly tender years. Sports, or rather the love of sports, is the great breaker-down, temporarily at least, of social barriers, of race prejudices, the great amalgamator of seemingly unfusable classes our wide, wide world over. At Lord's I have seen an Indian prince, an English clergyman, an Irish baronet, and an "h"-less cockney grasping in closest clasp the right red hands of fellowship, while their hearts brimmed over with brotherly and athletic love and triumph, and the St. John's Wood welkin

rang and rang again with the ten-thousand-throated cry of "Well played, sir! Well played indeed!" And any sunny afternoon you may see a group of eager-faced boys: grave-eyed Turks, soft-eyed Moors, strong-limbed Arabs, and graceful-limbed Algerians, gathered about a chess-board at which a Berber and a Negro urchin contest, beneath the almond and the palm trees that fringe the Mediterranean to-day as they fringed it when and where Dido used to bathe. They may not—or at least they do not—as a rule eat together, sleep together, or often walk together. But they pray together, and by all that's male and sportsmanlike, they play chess together, and applaud generously and impartially each other's prowess and victories.

But if all the boys of the Barbary States are instructed in skilful, but sedentary, games of chance, the Moorish boys have the proud distinction of monopolising one branch of manly education. Every Moorish boy is taught to knit—yes, truly every poetic-looking man-jack of them. And one class continue to knit into and through manhood. The Bey's soldiers cannot fight as we understand fighting; they cannot drill, much less "port and carry," but they all can and do knit. They knit as they walk about the streets, they knit on duty, they knit when they change guard. Why, I can by no means say, for they are a stockingless brigade, and, officers excepted, the Bey's is an army without a sock. Civilisation and semi-civilisation have, in their commendable love of and emulation over the "pomp and circumstance of war," devised many martial effects that are, when viewed by a candid and unjaundiced eye, startlingly risible.

But the soldiers of Korea's king and the soldiers of

Tunis's Bey have, I think, outdone the war-waging world. The guards who are on duty outside Li-Hsi's palace at Söul squat in baskets, hampers, three or four feet tall, out of which they have to scramble as best they can when duty calls. And the guards who are on duty outside Sidi Ali's palace at Tunis sit and knit socks, or weave baskets, while their guns lean negligently more or less near them. Such at least were the facts but a few years ago, and I have heard of no reform in these respects, either at Söul or Tunis.

The dress of a well-to-do Moorish boy is as pretty as he himself. His lithe waist is swathed in a brilliant silken sash. His short jacket is gay with embroidery. His full trousers fall to a nicety. His carefully twisted, carefully worn turban is snowy white or flaming yellow, or, chance he to be a descendant of the Prophet, it is folded of softest silk of brightest green, even before he makes the great pilgrimage. He has a cloak that a stage Romeo might covet, and a dainty handkerchief *en suite* and perfumed. His perfectly fitting stockings are of finest silk or thread, and of spotless white. His slender feet are thrust into delicate shoes of red morocco or yellow leather. He carries a silver-headed cane, and behind his dainty ear he wears a coquettish rose—a red, red rose—sweet as if it had grown in the Vale of Kashmír. And he is as well-behaved (in public at least) as he is well-dressed. He is soft of voice, courteous of gesture, punctilious and deferential of manner. Hazlitt says that "dress and address are the small coin in the intercourse of life that are continually in request," and goes on to say (if I remember him rightly) "that nothing which we can control are of more moment to our success in life."

Would not Hazlitt have been indeed well pleased with our well-bred, well-clad young Moor? In one respect he would have displeased the dear old English sage, for our Moorish boy does not learn to dance, and Hazlitt laid great stress upon dancing. No young Oriental gentleman is taught to dance. Dancing is a hireling's office in the East. Hazlitt was right, I think, as he usually was, and so are the Orientals. The English boy (God bless him, and then bless him again!) is a great lovable blunderbuss. The Moorish boy is instinct with grace. Teach an English boy to dance that he may knock a few less things over as he ploughs his manly way through life. Teach a Moorish boy to dance! 'Twere to add perfume to the rose!

Every Moorish boy is taught to ride, and it is his ambition to own, not a pony, but a mule. For the Moorish nobles all affect richly caparisoned mules in contrariety to the horse-loving Arabs.

If you would know in detail and at length what the Moorish boy is taught, what he feels, what he thinks, what his tendencies are, what his life will be—read the Koran. There you have it in a nutshell. I often wonder that intelligent Europeans who are really anxious to get behind the mask that Mohammedan peoples wear—to travel intelligently through Mohammedan countries—neglect to familiarise themselves with the Koran. Are you about to travel Eastward? Would you see as you go? Believe me, there is no guide-book like the Koran. It is the key to Mohammedanism and the Mohammedan heart.

The Koran is the text-book of every native boy in the Barbary States, except, of course, the always excepted

Jews. They learn it by heart; they learn to read from it; they learn to write it with their wooden pens. It is their primer, their catechism, their encyclopædia, their Bible. Mentally and morally it is to them what their mother's milk is physically; and it is more. It is the staff of their mental and moral life. A book we wot of dimly, you and I, yet verily it is to-day one of the great forces in the world.

The schools of Barbary are all in the mosques, and the holy men who are the teachers are reverenced by young and old. The boys, most especially the Moors and Turks, grow warmly and closely attached to those teachers, and often cling tenaciously to their friendship and guidance so long as they both live.

Three things the young Mohammedan is always taught to honour—his religion, his parents, and lunatics. Harmless madmen are held by all Mohammedans to be inspired —saints, in fact—and the most mischievous boy in Tunis will stop his play, hush his laughter, at the approach of a lunatic, and stand respectfully aside until the poor demented has gone past. And he has to do it not infrequently, for only the most violent madmen are under the least restraint. The crazy creature on the street is almost omnipotent among his fellow-citizens. Whatever he asks is given him, whatever he orders is done, and the veriest street arab neither dreams of disputing his authority nor of resisting it.

Many of the young Turks and Moors receive an education neither inferior to, nor far different from, that accorded at a European gymnasium or public school. And a European who was for some years a professor in the famous College Sadiki has assured me that he never

had brighter or more docile pupils on the northern shores of the Mediterranean than he had on its southern coasts.

All the boys of Barbary are trained in music, and many of them can make their own instruments. As for the girls! The girls of the upper class are taught nothing but to dress, and eat, and smile. When they are twelve or younger, they are fattened—fattened for the marriage market. I know of nothing more horrible in all the horrid chronicles of fashion.

In the Barbary States fatness is considered the crux of female loveliness, and, except among the uncouth blacks of equatorial Africa, nowhere in the world is excessive corpulence in woman so desired and so attained as in Barbary. The girls of Tunis are absolutely fattened as the geese of Strasburg are fattened for slaughter. They lie for months in damp, dark rooms, on pillows of feather, and are fed to repletion with the most fattening food. The details of the process are too disgusting to recite them unnecessarily. Deplorably the Jews, usually the most sensibly sanitary of peoples, in Tunis ape this horrid custom of the Mohammedans, and cram and deform their young daughters with a cruelty as gross and senseless as any that the "all-seeing sun e'er saw."

But the lovely faces of the girls of Barbary no ingenuity has yet succeeded in robbing of their divine beauty. Their bodies are fattened and tattooed, but their eyes and cheeks and lips are adorable and unalloyed in beauty.

CHAPTER XII.

BAMBINOS.

"We are born into life—it is sweet, it is strange.
We lie still on the knee of a mild Mystery
Which smiles with a change;
But we doubt not of changes, we know not of spaces,
The Heavens seem as near as our own mother's face is,
And we think we could touch all the stars that we see;
And the milk of our mother is white on our mouth;
And with small childish hands we are turning around
The apple of Life which another has found;
It is warm with our touch, not with sun of the south,
And we count as we turn it, the red side for four.
O Life, O Beyond,
Thou art sweet, thou art strange evermore!"

PER BACCO but I love them, every wicked, brown, black-eyed *bambino* of them! They are as sound, as sweet, as seductive, as sparkling, as satisfying as that rare wine that the monks brew from the grapes which grow on Vesuvius's warmest slope. "Born into life with great rejoicing, they indeed find it sweet—they do indeed "lie on the knee of a mild mystery." Through all their glad, unfettered, superstitious childhood the heavens may well, as they do, seem as near as the warm faces of their dark-browed mothers.

There is no country in all the Occident, perhaps none in all the world, in which children are so spoiled as they are in Italy. And yet for all that they are not obnoxious! They are so beautiful, so soft and warm, so sweet of voice,

A BAMBINO

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so gracious and graceful of gesture and of manner, that the austerest of foreigners is charmed rather than repelled by their impudence, and only notices the liberties they take, to urge them to take more. As for the Italians themselves, it never occurs to them that children could be impudent or take liberties. Unlimited licence is the first law of Italian childhood. I have seen an exquisitely groomed young officer of a crack Roman regiment stand, at a conspicuous point of a fashionable drive, talking to one of Rome's great ladies, and continue quite calmly and absolutely without annoyance, while a strange child examined the texture and the cut of his trousers, and traced the chasings of his sword's hilt with dirty brown fingers. And the beauty in the carriage only smiled slightly, not in amusement, but in greeting of the little one.

Both the soldier and the beauty accepted the situation as a matter of course. The intruder was a *bambino*, and a *bambino* may work its own sweet will in season and out—all the Italian world knows that. I myself, while paying an afternoon visit—a visit of some ceremony (at least so I thought, for it was a first one)—have had my parasol, my fan, and my handkerchief confiscated by three small bandits (the eldest was six, the youngest could just walk), while their mother, my hostess, looked on smiling. Parasol, fan, and handkerchief were all new and delicate, and I was in immediate discomfort without the two last. But the boys continued their game of war, delighted with their new paraphernalia, and their lovely, laughing mother kept up her brilliant chit-chat, unperturbed and conscience free. Not that she was for a moment an indifferent or a less than courteous hostess. She simply thought nothing

of her little boys' bravado, and had I been Italian I should have thought nothing of it either. It grew so warm that I began to wonder if I might ask for my fan, when my host remarked, "You are warm," and brought me a fan. He brought it from a distant room, and my frail Paris finery still "faced fearful odds!"

The parasol Roberto carried as a gun, the handkerchief Luigi had turned into a flag (alas! not of truce), and the fan served the sturdy baby for a vigorously used drum-stick. I must add that the boys played, not over noisily, in the vast room's far end, and that their mimic war was beautifully dramatic and artistic too. A long anecdote, but it illustrates the domestic placement of thousands and hundreds of thousands of Italian children.

All Italians rejoice at a child's birth. They are warm-hearted, they love life, and they adore all young, soft, tender things. Among the poorest and most ignorant classes there are a thousand superstitious reasons why every newborn baby (no matter into how crowded a cradle) gets a hearty welcome. One will suffice. The exact date of the near end of the world is often rumoured among the superstitious peasant folk. Now, every Italian dreads death with a dread which the Anglo-Saxon mind finds it difficult to conceive. Anything, everything, to avoid death! Even the well-born, the well-educated Italian shrinks from the very thought of death, and never thinks of his own death at all, if he can in any ingenious way avoid doing so. How much more the untutored, mentally undisciplined peasant fears to realise that he must some day descend into the grave, is easily conceivable. The thought, the fear that at some definite day he and every other of all earth's souls must face

death is innumerable times more terrible if he is childless! For if none survive him who shall buy masses for his soul, and pay its way out of purgatory? Thousands of Italian peasants believe that for seven years before the end of the world no child will be born into it. Hence, when into the home of a so-believing peasant a child is born, that humble home becomes, in a double sense, a house of joy.

The Italian baby is christened when it is a very young (I had almost written "a very small," but the Italian baby is, as a rule, never small at all) baby indeed. The peasant baby is baptised before it is two days old, and the urban baby almost as soon. Among the peasants (for again, as I have said before, we must cling to the peasantry, if we would see the really racial customs) the christening day is a day of function and of pageant. The peasant father's house is garnished (if not swept), his board is loaded until it groans and groans again. The guests arrive—the peasants dressed in their best, for the bulk, of course; but more likely than not, a lady or two—yes, and perhaps a gentleman—of rank, to crown all; for the Italians are loyal to their faithful family servants, as those retainers are to them; and then, too, all Italy is good-natured, and all Italy loves to pay homage to King Baby.

As each guest enters he or she is ushered to the bedside of the exultant mother. She lies flushed and smiling in a room not quite shut off from the kitchen in which the savoury, oily christening feast is a-sizzing and a-cooking. The baby, swaddled and swathed as no baby out of Italy ever was, lies beside her. And as the baby blesses the garlicky air with broad Italian "A's" and soft Italian "O's" the mother shouts advice and orders to the kitchen,

and smiles and murmurs welcome and hospitality to her swarming guests. Some such function and its attendant excitement killed Henry VIII.'s third and perhaps best-loved wife. It does not often kill the brown-browed mother of our Italian *bambino.*

Baby is carried to church and baptised very much as all babies of Roman Catholic birth are. The sacrament over —but before the church is quitted—*Bambino* is passed around, to its sponsors first, then to all the rest of its courtiers. Each one kisses the unconscious, but oh! so kissable face, and with each kiss a coin is tucked tightly into the innumerable folds of *Bambino's* inexpressibly numerous swaddling clothes. The coins are not often large, but they are gladly given, and with a fervent blessing. Best of all, they are invariably anonymous, and because of them *Bambino* leaves the sacred place a person of property.

Bambino is carried home, and home reached, its elders eat in its honour, such a christening breakfast as even poverty can lay upon the lap of love in Italy, and of all Europe's countries in Italy only. And yet the fruits and the exquisitely prepared vegetables that are the chief charm of the usual humble Italian meal are absent. To serve them would be too every-day, too cheap a thing. *Bambino* will have enough of them when he is a year or too older. He will (especially if he lives Naples way) eat the flesh of melons and wash his healthy face in their fragrant juice. He will learn before he walks, or sooner, to regale himself on black bread or garlic and on *caccio-carallo,* certainly the most pungent of odour, and perhaps the most strongly nutritive cheese on earth.

The Italian children live so much with their parents

that they have but few games of their own, or rather, the parents of Italy live so much with, and so akin to their children, so share in and so love their games, that it were almost impossible to say where Italian child life ends and where Italian adult life begins. Perhaps it is, nay, I feel it is the chief charm of all Italians that none are too young to enjoy and revere art, to accept the responsibilities of life, and to love duty for the sake of those to whom they owe it; that none are too old to love the lilt of life's song, the echo of the dance beneath the shadow of the vineyards; that none are so stupid as to fail to see and to worship the beauty of truth and the truth and divinity of beauty. Perhaps, above all, the Italians are supremely charming, because not the roughest of them but, when he stands beside a baby, feels in his big, sentimental, dramatic, but sincere heart, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven!"

If Italian paternity is fine, how may we term Italian maternity? It excels almost all other motherhoods in beauty, in gladness, and in ease.

All womanly women, all lovable women know, but beyond other women and better than other women, Italian

> "women know
> The way to rear up children (to be just),
> They know a simple, merry, tender knack
> Of tying sashes, fitting baby-shoes,
> And stringing pretty words that make no sense,
> And kissing full sense into empty words,
> Which things are corals to cut life upon,
> Although such trifles: children learn by such
> Love's holy earnest in a pretty play,
> And get not over-early solemnised,
> But seeing, as in a rose-bush, Love's desire
> Which burns and hurts not—not a single bloom,
> Become aware and unafraid of Love."

These exquisite lines of Mrs. Browning's describe Italian motherhood to a miracle.

Happy, happy children to grow up in the protective shadow of Italian mother-love, and to bask in the sunshine of such warm, laughing mother-eyes!

Happy for Christian art that the greatest of her early masters were Italians, for they have indelibly stamped the Mary of our modern imagination with the noble, placid personalities, and the lovely, regal faces of the highest type of Italian womanhood. It is a type, even in its peasant examples, worthy to represent the mother divinest and most blessed.

The Italian women are instinctive mothers. With them motherhood is an inspiration, an avocation, a religion, but never a drudgery. And so their children, even those of the utmost poverty, grow up, as children have a right to do, untrammelled and undeformed of soul and nature.

We pour lavishly the vitriol of our British wrath and scorn over the itinerant Italian peasants who come among us, and, on our London streets, tender us musicless music and unmentionable ice-creams. Quite right of us! This is the age of scoffers. And all the gods forbid that we should be behind the age or childishly aloof from it. They are an abhorrent lot, these lazy, grimy, wandering Italians, and they are most so when they have a child or children with them. I often see such a couple near the Guildhall. The man is handsome, or would be if his expression were less sour. The woman has a lovely face, but it is not always puritanically clean, and her gay head-cloth is faded and tattered. They have a donkey to help pull the organ, a donkey almost as thin

and discontented-looking as those our costers drive. And they have a baby—such a baby!—it is impudently fat and insolently happy as it lies and crows in its nest in front of the organ. And when it grows restless the father picks it up and tosses it, or walks it about, leaving the mother to turn the organ. That's for effect. If it falls asleep, he puts it back into its ambulatory bed very, very gently. That's for effect too. In the lanes near Winchester I once saw its father kiss such a baby very gently as he bent to cover it more snugly as it slept. He could not see me as I stood, but doubtless he did it to keep himself in practice. In any case it was theatrical, Latin, and not to be admired. No, let us find no good in the half-starved Italians who are the unwelcome strangers within our gates.

But there can be no great harm in admiring the good traits of the Italians who stay in Italy. Emigration is our virtue; it is other nations' vice. I have seen the poorest Italian peasants become patrician under the refinement of paternity. However scanty her food, bare her home, insufficient her raiment, and hard and roughening her daily life, the Italian woman becomes a gentlewoman when she becomes a mother. I have seen the most ignorant peasants of the Roman Campania caress and tend their children with a grace and a dignity that was positively Greek, classic, and altogether lovely. I have time and again heard haggling, railing booth-women of the Venice fishmarket drop their voices into pleasant softness when speaking to a child; I have seen the chestnut sellers on the Spanish Steps and the cake venders of Naples generous to a fault when their customer happened to be a scantily-clad child; I have chanced more

than once to see all Rome uncover as the *santissimo Bambino*, the imaged Christ-child, was carried through the streets; I have often seen a Roman noble and a Roman beggar kneel together before the Christmastide Holy Manger of Santa Maria Maggiore; and I am convinced that it was the divinity of childhood, as well as the divinity of Christ, that moved all Italy to deep and tender reverence.

Do the Italians never abandon or neglect their children? "I know of no country in which little children are never abandoned and never neglected. The Italians sometimes abandon their children, in the sense of laying them in the *ruoto* or foundling-wheel, or by leaving them in the receiving drawer of one of the many institutions from which they can at any time reclaim them. This they do sometimes. And in marking it, we must remember the truly terrible poverty of the Italian masses. Children are almost never neglected (except by being forsaken), and I think I may say that they are never maltreated. Infanticide is rare, and has not increased since the Government has so largely abolished the *ruotos*. That seems to prove that the Italian mother who abandons her babe does so—as a rule—for its benefit rather than for her own relief. The French peasant is really wealthy in comparison with the Italian peasant; yet the proportion of infanticide in France is very far in excess of the proportion in Italy. Perhaps this is somewhat due to the excessively drastic French laws regarding illegitimacy—laws that strike us as strange indeed when we consider how shrewd a people the French people is, and how sorely France needs population.

The infant mortality of Italy is terribly large, but

this must be set down to poverty and ignorance, and not to vice. The great bulk of Italian peasantry is terribly ignorant. I remember a typical Italian institution, a convent near Florence, which was a receiving home for foundlings. The day after a child was left there it was sent into the country to paid, but kind, peasant foster-parents. The nuns kept constant trace of it and saw it regularly. If the mother had left with it any distinguishing mark, such as a ribbon, a broken coin, or a peculiar garment, that mark was scrupulously preserved, and with it the child's identity. And even after a lapse of years the parents could claim their child. They were required to offer some plausible proof that it was theirs. The other half of the coin was considered ample testimony, or a twin bit of ribbon. A very large proportion of the children so left were so claimed and taken home.

There are throughout Italy admirable homes for orphan girls. They are under the supervision of sisterhoods; for the Government has suppressed both nunneries and monasteries with great discrimination. Those engaged in useful national or charitable work have been but little interfered with. The girl inmates of these orphanages are suitably taught and reared. Each such home trains its girls thoroughly in some remunerative industry. At many of them they make the most exquisite of all the artificial flowers that are sold in Paris and St. Petersburg. Half of what each girl earns goes to reimburse the convent for her maintenance. Half is put away toward her dowry, or she may, if she prefer, send it to destitute relatives, should she chance to have any and of decent character.

The learned Italians give place to no scholars of

Europe. The ignorant Italians are profoundly ignorant, more ignorant than many so-called savage peoples. It is difficult for us to realise this, because they are at once so dignified and so sweet of bearing, because they are so ox-eyed and so soft of voice. The law suggests that every child shall go to school from its sixth birthday until its twelfth. I say "suggests" because its enforcement is farcically lax. Still the standard and the average of education is steadily improving, and no children learn more quickly than do the little Italians, and few learn more thoroughly or remember better.

The Italians are a gregarious people. They abhor solitude. It seems impossible for them to exist except in flocks. This is so universally true (at least of the peasantry and of the middle classes), that it has been said that they do not love the country. It has been my observation that they love the country, but do not like to be in it alone, or in small parties. An Italian child hates and dreads hunger and cold less than it dreads and hates solitude. These children bear the ills of poverty with real fortitude and true philosophy. They bear the ordeal of loneliness very badly. I once heard a shivering little herdsboy on a bleak hill-slope say, "It makes me no hungrier to sing, and it makes me much warmer."

The Italians are altogether an agricultural people, and they live, even in their scant leisure, greatly out of doors. The streets are always full of children. Nine out of ten Italian nurseries are out of doors, furnished (except for a low basket-cradle) altogether by Nature. Very cosy, dainty nurseries they are, with matchless narcissi and spicy pink carnations for carpets, with blue satin sky and white lace clouds for ceiling, and rose trees and

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lemon, citron trees and oleander for walls. The peasant mother will not hesitate to leave her nursling for hours in the open, with only a shaggy sheep-dog and her prayers to guard him. If the babe has not been weaned she anoints his eyes with her own milk before she leaves him. That will guard him from the evil eye. The faithful dog will guard him from all else and rock the low cradle too if Baby wakes, and keep the vicious summer flies away.

The gaudy little models and fruit and flower sellers that we see in every Italian city, and most of all in Rome, are by no means the idle little vagrants that we are so apt to think them. Most of them come to the city after the long, hard summer's work is done—the trying work of farm and field, and of which each wee toddler has done his baby share.

I must not forget the children of the brigands, nor the staunch loyal paternity of those unscrupulous outlaws. They laugh on the gallows, and, with fine and unassumed cynicism, munch cakes of olives and maize flour and pistachio nuts and garlic as they gaily walk to the halter. They defy the present and scoff at the hereafter. They flaunt religion and outrage law. But no class in Europe is more solicitous for its offspring's spiritual welfare than these same handsome, heartless, dare-devil cutthroats. They have often invaded a village and commanded that their children should be baptised, with fullest ceremonial, in the church. And it has always been done, too. Sometimes the villagers were too terrified to resist, sometimes too sympathetic. For, like most outlaws, the Italian brigands are too good-hearted to rob the poor, or do not think it worth their while. The brigand often scorns

religion for himself, but he ardently desires it for his son, and for him will pay any price for it.

When I first went to Rome, a child of eight, our frequent and familiar visitor was a prelate of the Roman Church. He had been my father's school-fellow, and they were warm and lifelong friends. He has a red hat now, and he was a bishop then. But, in his younger manhood, his early priesthood, he had many a mad or maddening adventure in the wild passes of the Apennines. One story he told me that I never tired of begging to hear again. A famous brigand seized him one lovely autumn day and carried him to his mountain lair. Rich fare, abundant and dainty, was laid before the indignant priest. Flasks of rare wine were opened for him. And as he ate, the brigands and the brigand women tended him with utmost servility, and with loaded guns at their reach and nasty knives in their belts. They gave him a luxurious bed. They gave him a sumptuous breakfast. Then the chief brigand said, "Christen my bambino. Christen him 'Guiseppe.' Receive him into Holy Church, or I will have you hanged." The babe was christened in blessed brook water, christened "Guiseppe." Then they let the priest depart, but not until he had partaken of another feast more regal than the last, and accepted a heavy purse of gold. Then he was sent with a guard of honour—sent to a safe part of the path from which he had been snatched. He had received no incivility, and no attempt was made to rob him, though he had convent gold in his wallet and a cross of much value on his breast. And for years, on the anniversary of that strange christening day, a gift for Father —— would be mysteriously left at the door of his quiet convent on the Arno's southern bank.

Italian children are fond of games, and as expert as they are fond. They excel in all ball games, and it is one of the pretty sights of Europe to see a merry group of Italian boys, with their Murillo-like beauty of face and faun-like beauty of body, playing *pallone.* That is their favourite of all their games. It is not unlike our racquets, a species of hand-ball, and requires and begets great skill.

Bocce, which they play with one small and any number of large balls, is almost as pretty a sport as *pallone;* and *ruzzola* or dice-throwing as only Italians can throw dice, is as fascinating to watch as it is discouraging to attempt.

Italian children delight in the mad frolic and licence of Carnival time, but delight less perhaps than their elders do. For all time is high carnival to the bambinos, and for them Lent brings no restrictions—restrictions calling for an anticipatory excess. But the bambinos take an active part in all the days and nights of Carnival. They usually go to bed when they choose—the free babies of free Italy —and at Carnival time they sit up till unmentionable hours, and mingle recklessly with the reckless crowds of clowns and harlequins, of dwarfs and giants, and of grotesque two-leggeds with donkey heads and dog heads, and heads of bears and wolves. The children shout and sing and laugh and throw ruthless handfuls of confetti—the gayest masques of all the masquers. And the excited adults remember even in their mad excitement to be very gentle with the little children, forbidding them not, no matter how much in the way they get, and returning their fire of stinging confetti with a rain of flowers and sweetmeats.

After the little Malays, the bambinos are the most expert bird-catchers and the most successful bird-tamers

I have ever known. One day in Carnival I undertook to buy and set free every bird that any child offered for sale at our Corso balcony. I was a child then, an only child and an optimistic, and my father was generous to a crime. But his silver and the daylight were both all gone long before the wild-bird market was exhausted.

Only the Chinese excel the Italians in a genius for cookery. Almost all Italian girls are carefully taught to cook, and the boys can cook without being taught.

They are delightful, merry, careless little creatures, the bambinos; but they are all brave, very brave. In the high mountains wolves are a ceaseless source of danger and of terror, and a constant menace to children left alone. It is a really frequent occurrence for some peasant child to save a baby's life by a fearless encounter with these sneaking beasts of prey. Many a bambino, a half-wild creature of the Campania, has given its life to save a sleeping baby from the cruel wolf jaws. Sometimes the children, the saviour and the saved, have been of no kindred. Truly the antique Roman spirit is not dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHILDREN OF CHINA.

"If he had loved,
Ay, loved me, . . .
I might have been a common woman now
And happier, less known and less left alone,
Perhaps a better woman after all,
With chubby children hanging on my neck
To keep me low and wise. Ah me, the vines
That bear such fruit are proud to stoop with it.
The palm stands upright in a realm of sand."

ON the great figure-crowded canvas of the nineteenth century there is to-day no other figure half so pathetic as the figure of a Chinese child.

It is welcomed by its father because it secures him a probably perpetual worshipper when he shall be entombed with his ancestors, and, therefore, a probably secure seat about the cosy, but not oppressive, fireplace of the Celestial heaven; and it is welcomed by its mother because it secures her her most real, if not her first real, welcome, and her first secure place within the home of her husband.

The Chinese emphatically believe, as Napoleon did, that the greatest woman is she who is the mother of the most sons. From the hour of the birth of the first child a Chinese wife becomes a person of great importance in her husband's house, and it is a great mistake to suppose

that Chinese wives, who are also mothers, are treated with any lack of consideration, not to mention kindness. The mother of children, especially the mother of sons, is idolised rather than otherwise by the great majority of Chinese husbands. When a child is born the date of its birth is written on a long, narrow slip of scarlet paper. This is the Chinese registration of birth, and the paper is kept very carefully. When the first son is born two candles that were sent by the husband to the wife very early in the days of their betrothal are lighted, as a sign that the marriage has been blessed in the highest possible way.

Almost all the gods in the Chinese heaven are men gods, but there is at least one very important goddess there. She is called "Mother," and is the goddess, the patron saint, the guardian angel of every Chinese child under sixteen years of age.

When the baby is three days old trays of fruit and sweets, and of meats (if the latter can possibly be afforded), are placed beneath the picture or image of "Mother." Joss-sticks and candles are lit, garlands and bunches of flowers are placed between the viands, and at least one kind of wine is added to the feast. This is a thank-offering for the safe birth of the child and the safe delivery of the mother, and in the latter respect is somewhat, in its heathen way, analogous to one of the customs of the English Church. Among the well-to-do, presents of congratulation are, on the same day, sent to the parents. Fowls are conspicuous features of these "congratulation gifts." Vermicelli, of which the Chinese are passionately fond, is sent, put up in all kinds of peculiar packages. Cakes, red and yellow and green,

A FAVORITE DAUGHTER

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hard to the touch, repulsive to the eye, but rather sweet to the tooth, and one or more of fifty other things, are also proper presents to send to the parents of a three-days'-old Chinese baby. When Baby is two weeks old "Mother" is again substantially thanked; thanked this time for having kept the baby alive so long. When the child is a month old the first greatly important event of its life takes place. Its head is solemnly and thoroughly shaved; in front of "Mother's" shrine, if the baby be a girl; in front of its ancestral tablets, if it has the luck to be a boy. In every case candles and joss-sticks and thank-offerings are prepared by the parents and accepted by the goddess, or the no-less-worshipped ancestors. A feast is given to which friends and relatives are invited. Those who accept the invitation are expected, and by custom obliged, to bring gifts of coin, or jewellery, or food. But presents of equal value are sent them in return. When the baby is four months old there is another feast, another interchange of presents, and another expression of gratitude to "Mother." When the baby is a year old "Mother" again comes in for a lot of good things and a lot of adoration, and the baby's maternal grandmother, if alive, presents the child and parents with garments and edibles.

At all these feasts the child's father and his male friends drink a considerable quantity of arrack or sam-chu, a liquor made from rice, and regale themselves on sundry Chinese dainties which are not supposed to be consumed by Chinese women. A child's name is usually given it when its head is shaved. A Chinese has always two names, often four. A boy has one in childhood, one at school, and many of them assume what is called a "public

name"—a name which he signs with a "chop" or stick, and uses in business and in keeping a shop, or in any other commercial branch of life which brings him into contact with numbers of people who are not his personal friends. And, as in Japan, when a Chinaman dies, he again receives a new name. In China the surname comes first, and the given name comes last.

Chinese parents who can afford it pay tribute to "Mother" upon each birthday of each of their children; that is, of course, until the children are sixteen. Then "Mother" is supposed to have lost all interest in them, since they have reached maturity. These thank-offerings are called "burning papers to 'Mother,'" though the burning of prayer-papers is not always a part of the function.

In most ways Chinese children are very like all other children. They are a little brighter than most, and more obedient than many others. They are as fond of frolic and of laughter, games, and toys, and good times generally, as any youngsters in the world.

China makes, more than any other country I know, one big acknowledgment of the potential greatness of her little ones. Chinese children wear clothes in cut, shape, quality, and fit almost analogous to the clothes their parents wear. The children of the Chinese poor, as do such children all the world over, wear rags, but they make rags go as far as rags can; and if those rags are so unorthodox as to dwindle into a string the Chinese children who wear them wallow in the Chinese sunshine (sunshine as yellow and dimpled as themselves) or shrink from the Chinese frost, without realising that they outrage the god of Chinese propriety.

The children of the well-to-do Chinese, in the winter, and in the north of China, wear quaint frocks of silk, of satin, of brocade, made thick and warm with a padding of cotton wool, and deftly embroidered, and garments of fur. In the summer they wear thin silks and lovely Chinese crêpes.

Almost every Chinese child of high station carries a fan. Fans are the rattles of Chinese babyhood. A Chinese nurse diverts her young charge with views of her swiftly moved, gaily painted fan. With that same fan she cools for him the torrid air of the Chinese summer; and when he grows strong enough to walk, and totters about, with Asiatic masculine arrogance, upon his well-developed, yellow legs, his apple-faced mother, if forced to criticise his momentary mode of life, is very apt to score his yellow shoulders with her pink, perfumed fan. Though, to be honest, a Chinese child is almost never struck.

Many Chinese children who have scarcely a garment, and rarely have an ample dinner, have fans, and are expert in their use, for in China the manner in which a fan is carried, opened, used, and moved, is almost as significant as it is in Korea. The nakedest Chinese boy will be almost sure to own a kite. Chinese children are as skilful as Japanese children in kite-flying, and are almost as fond of it as the children of Siam.

It is more than religion with the Chinese to obey as their ancestors have obeyed, and in all things to follow in the footsteps of those ancestors. This held China together for centuries, but now the reluctance of the Chinese to make use of methods and implements of war that were unknown to and unused by their ancestors

threatens to make China, if not a nation of the past, at least a nation torn and dismembered.

Courtesy is one of the first lessons taught to the children of China. Almost every Chinese child, rich or poor, is taught how to address his parents, his superiors, his fellows, and his inferiors. Except among the very poorest classes, a considerable portion of each day is devoted by the child to the study of etiquette. Boys and girls are educated together until they are about ten; then, unless the poverty of their family is such that they are obliged to assist in the struggle for bread, the boys go to school or have a tutor, and the girls are taught at home by a governess.

If the worship of ancestors and obedience to parents and superiors is the religion of the Chinese, education is their universal ambition. They positively worship learning, and have the greatest respect for people who have acquired it. Naturally enough, then, Confucius is the particular god, the patron saint of every Chinese school. When a boy first goes to school he takes with him joss-sticks, and painted candles, and a small packet of mock money, all of which he burns before a strip of cloth or paper, on which is inscribed one of the many titles of Confucius, the boy bowing while his offering burns. This ceremony is called "entering school" and "worshipping the sage."

A Chinese school in full swing is a rather noisy affair, and rather startling to one who has only been accustomed to the quiet of a well-regulated English school-room. Each pupil studies continually, aloud, and probably from a different book.

Among the wealthy classes a boy's life is one long

succession of examinations, as his social position and his political advancement will depend entirely upon the degree of scholarship to which he can prove he has attained.

Chinese children spend a great deal of time with their parents, and it was my observation that the girls were as well treated, as much petted, and as well cared for as the boys. The daughters of the rich are taught to take great care of their personal appearance, great pride in their garments and jewels, and to dress their eyebrows—a very important part of any Chinese feminine toilet among the mandarin and wealthiest classes. In a rich family the feet of all the girls are generally bound, and the seven-year-old daughter of a red-buttoned mandarin, though she may sob and cry bitterly during the operation, would resent it more bitterly if she were left to walk through life on feet of normal size.

Chinamen nurse their children a great deal. I have more often seen a Chinese baby or small child in the lap of a man than in the lap of a woman.

A large proportion of the Chinese children are born, live, and die on boats. Strangely enough none, or nearly none, of them can swim. But almost every Chinese child is an expert fisher, and exceedingly fond of the sport. Fish and rice form very largely the diet of every Chinese child. Except among the very poor the children and the women eat apart from the men.

The children of the wealthier people eat considerable poultry and unlimited fruit. Among the poor Chinese the girls are taught to cook, to do all sorts of household work, and to sew roughly. I have eaten some delicious dinners cooked by a Chinese girl of twelve. Indeed, cooking is the great national talent of the Chinese.

The boys of the poorer classes are taught one or more of a thousand ways of earning a living. I remember one merry little fellow who lived not very far from where the army of the victorious Japanese Marshal, Oyama, was so long encamped. He lived alone with his grandfather, who was blind and lame, and the small fellow (I think he could not have been over eight, perhaps not so old) was the real bread-winner of the family. They had a hatching establishment—a small hut with a very low roof—on which the sun in summer beat down fiercely. Near the hut was a good-sized pond, divided by stakes and boards into small sections. On the floor of the hut they hatched ducks' eggs, and when the ducklings were sufficiently hatched they were put afloat upon the pond. People came for miles, bringing from a dozen to some hundreds of eggs. Those eggs were wrapped in coarse napkins and put on the floor of the hut, and left there until the sun had done the natural work of the mother duck. The process, if I remember, took the better part of a month. I have seen the floor of the hut completely covered with eggs. But it was said that the small boy never made a mistake. At all events, his customers seemed satisfied to a man that they invariably received the result of their own eggs.

Chinese children are born with a love of nature. I have seen the smallest mites sit for hours thoroughly happy in the contemplation of a flowering tree or a peculiarly beautiful sky. They also have an ineradicable instinct for gambling. They gamble almost as soon as they walk.

As a rule Chinese children are pretty. They have plump, smooth, yellow faces, and rosy cheeks, soft skin,

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pretty hands and feet, and eyes that are fascinating when one grows used to them.

Chinese babies are carried on the backs of their nurses. They are slung in big handkerchiefs, the ends of which pass over the nurse's shoulders, and are firmly fastened in front or about her belt. And many a Chinese girl, after her feet are bound, only takes the air carried on the back of a Chinese servant.

Chinese children are bright, obedient, docile, cheerful, ready to play, and ready to work. Pity that many such children should have been butchered at Port Arthur! Cruel irony that such children should suffer as they are suffering, and as they probably will suffer for years, if not generations, because they and their fathers before them have too implicitly obeyed what we call the fifth commandment; because they come of a race that has loved its ancestors "not wisely, but too well," and adopted their methods with too blind, too filial a respect. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

Boys and girls must be well versed in the sacred Book Of Rites, the most important book in China, a voluminous volume, containing clear rules for almost every possible situation in life. Chinese classics, mathematics, writing of poetry, philosophy, Chinese history, and political economy, are studied assiduously by the sons of every well-to-do Chinaman.

O MAN.

He was a foundling, as fat as any butter, and yellow as a healthy pumpkin. Years after (after he was a foundling), a malicious young Chinaman started the rumour

that O Man had European blood. That was a lie, a libellous lie. He was Chinese to the core, and Chinese on the surface, every yellow inch of him. I know all about him, but, if I did not, I'd swear to his unadulterated nationality from his eyes alone. They are so narrow that they look as if they were peeping out at the world through slits that had been made in the buff parchment of O Man's face—made with one stroke of a very sharp knife. Mr. O, the highborn but sonless gentleman that adopted O Man, is very wealthy, and he had a scamp of a nephew named Tee Sin, who had hoped to be adopted by the rich old man, for Tee Sin's father was poor and had many sons. Mr. O loved his sister, Mrs. Tee. He sent her red lacquer boxes of stuffs and rich drawers, and jackets and skins; he sent her whole pigs and roast fowls, and trays of sweetmeats and big packets of superior tea, and many honorific and complimentary messages every New Year's morning; and he did many other things in a delicate way, to help his less well-to-do sister and her many children. But he never had any intention of adopting her good-for-nothing son, Sin. And Tee Sin, when O Man was adopted instead, was very much astonished and felt outraged and vicious, as people are apt to do in China, and elsewhere, when they fail to get what they have never in the least deserved, or even tried to deserve. So Tee Sin started the ugly story that O Man was at least an eighth English (and missionary English at that!), and quite unfit to worship at the ancestral tablets of the great O family. This so enraged Mr. O that he regretted having only the month before shown his sister (Sin's mother) the delicate attention of presenting her with an elaborate, handsome, and very costly coffin. It was an article so

exceptionally handsome—even in China, where the fine and solemn art of coffin-making and coffin-ornamentation is studied and practised with a care and zeal unknown in other parts of the world—that it excited the envy and the admiration of all Mrs. Tee's friends. It was placed, of course, in the place of honour in the Tees' chief room, and it remains there to this day, the joy and pride of all the Tees and the light of Mrs. Tee's eyes. And it will so remain there until that proud hour when Mrs. Tee, quite dead, shall, amid her best robes, be consigned to its well-padded bosom, and carried out, amid the blare of tom-toms, the flare of sky-rockets, the shriek of fifes and flutes, and the noisier wailings of hired mourners, the chief actor in the sumptuous, barbarous pageant of a Chinese funeral; for I have no doubt that Mr. O will provide his sister (by will if he predeceases her) with an elegant and creditable funeral. He might not have done so had she had the misfortune to die before the ugly tale of Tee Sin's telling had been cleared up. But after it was cleared up, Mr. O's wrath cooled down.

It was Mr. O himself who had the antecedents of O Man searched out, and the mystery of his birth made no longer a mystery, but a clear fact. I knew the O's when this happened, and that is why I am able to tell you all about O Man; beginning at his birth, and not at that later moment when his sobbing mother laid him, a kicking, crowing bundle, in the bamboo receiving-basket of the Shanghai Foundlings' Home. O Man was born in a humble little thatched farmhouse that stood on the sunny slope of an azalea-covered hill, not many miles from the city of Ningpo. He was not called O Man then, of course, but we may call him so altogether. It may serve to save

us from some confusion, and it will, I think, be kinder not to mention his parents' name.

It was as picturesque a place as any in the world, the place where he was born. His father had a tiny opium farm. The flaming poppy flowers were in full bloom, and lay about the shabby little grey house like a field of blood. There was a minute patch of snow-white Indian opium flowers mingling their meek but radiant beauty with that of their flaming Chinese sisters. How they had got there no one seemed to know, for while the white poppy yields so incomparably superior opium, it is the blood-red poppy that the Chinese cultivate almost exclusively.

It was the azalea season—a time of matchless beauty, but all too brief—and the hillsides were all one great mass of crimson, orange, and lilac flowers. A waving line of cool-looking, tender-leaved willows ran through the flaring mass of the azaleas, and told of some hidden stream's soft gurgling over its pebbly, moss-lined bed. Beyond the hills and where the showy poppy cultivation ceased, wild flowers grew in lovely, lavish masses. Fragrant pink clover, yellow rape, and golden buttercups ran riot. A tottery old bridge hung over a brilliant bed of geraniums and forget-me-nots, that grew, carpet-like, upon the slight ravine that the insecure old bridge spanned. The bridge itself you could scarcely see, it was so thickly veiled by pink and white and crimson honeysuckles, and incense-exhaling, starry jasmine, and great plump wild roses, crimson, white, scarlet, amber, pink, and tenderest yellow.

O Man's brother (I have gone back to a period a little, a very little before O Man's birth) was coming home singing in a sweet shrill falsetto, as he rode upon the great, grotesque, ugly-looking farm buffalo; for like David of

old he was a herdsman by profession, and a musician for diversion, was this small boy with an infant queue sprouting from his carefully shaven head. He was as naked as the ungainly beast he rode, and as they came slowly on he switched idly with his long wand of willow at the few mulberry trees that edged the little farm. That was careless. But it did not matter much, for those few trees were his mother's special charge. She it was who always climbed them to prune them, and gather or cut the small branches on which the leaves grew, the leaves with which she fed her little hoard of silkworms. But the silkworm industry was at a standstill there just then, and the buffalo herd was at liberty to waste the mulberry leaves to the full content of his innocently wanton boy's heart. A silkworm's life is brief (but thirty-two days) in China; but it is full of red-tape if not of days. No one who is ill or deformed may enter the feeding worms' house or room. Neither may one in recently assumed mourning, nor any who have eaten even one of many prescribed things. Above all, no pregnant woman may approach the precious worms. And, since the worms of this special farm cannot now be fed (for the husband and the one living child are far too busy), the boy may switch at the mulberry leaves with his wand of willow.

In China an expectant mother is strangely restricted in her daily life by fantastic ceremonial rules. She must avoid all sitting fowls. She must not look upon any dead face—not even though that dead may, when living, have been her dearest, nearest; her mother, her husband, or her child. These, and many other ordinary and natural things, she may not do. But in China, as everywhere else, poverty defies all laws, and lets down the bars of social

observances, raise them how we will. And many of the restrictions laid upon pregnant women are more strictly observed by women of rank—or rather of wealth—than by the women of the people, who are, naturally, somewhat handicapped, even in their observance of prescribed forms in which they sincerely believe. I said in the previous sentence, wishing to indicate women of the leisure class, "women of rank," and then corrected myself by adding, "or rather of wealth." The Chinese of rank are almost always wealthy; but the rich are by no means always of high rank. In England rank often follows wealth. In China wealth almost always follows rank. The London tradesman of whom I buy my shoeblacking may, very possibly, get a knighthood, if he can sell enough blacking, and gives liberally enough to fashionable charities. And the fact that he has overcharged me for many a bottle of sable fluid forbids not his social canonisation. In China also, nobles spring from the masses, but with a difference. The son of a ragged, half-fed coolie may become a mandarin, but his social rise will be the result of filial devotion, of patriotism, of intellectual achievement, or of some other fine quality. The Goldsmiths of China are not imprisoned for debt. The Homers of Pekin need not beg their bread in the Chinese streets. Intellectual strength and personal merit are the "open sesame" to Chinese ennoblement—not mercantile shrewdness or financial luck.

As he neared the little grey house the boy saw his father come out and hang a huge bunch of fir over the door. Then the boy knew that his mother had given birth to a child. The evergreens signified it, and warned all visitors from the threshold, for, in that part of China, until a child is a month old, no one save the nurse must

A LITERATI OF THE FIRST DEGREE

(A BOY WHO HAS PASSED WELL IN HIS EXAMINATIONS)

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approach the mother. No member of the family, no servant even may enter a temple until the month has passed. If any stranger, through braggadocio or inadvertence, disregards the bunch of evergreens and enters the house he becomes unclean, and must pass through the same purifying ceremonies that are incumbent upon members of the household.

The boy turned the buffalo's head, flicked it with the wand of willow, and finally halted beside some lovely blue-blossomed kiri shrubs. He did not know that botanists called those shrubs *Paulownia Imperialis*, nor that their bell-shaped, violet-blue blossoms had been conventionalised for the house crest of Japan's Mikado. But he knew that on his father's poppy farm they grew, some distance from the house where his mother lay—his mother who must not be disturbed. He was glad his mother had not died. He knew that had she died in childbed her soul would have been held in purgatory, and much scourged there until many sacrifices had been made for her in the village temple. He looked at all the flower-wealth about him, and listened to the sweet-throated cuckoos, that were singing in the hawthorn clumps, and wondered if his mother much minded having to stay in the house for one hundred days. He would have detested it. He wondered if his father would wear new shoes, and carry a new fan when, a month from the baby's birth, he went to the temple to give thanks. He wondered whether it was a brother or a sister that had been born, and he was glad when his father came out and told him that it was a boy. It was a happy and, in its simple way, a prosperous home into which O Man was born.

When O Man was two months old there was a plague.

Famine followed plague. In despair the parents left their ruined opium farm. His mother carried O Man, and his father led the elder boy. After many, many weary days they reached far-off Shanghai. There, too, times were bad. Disease and want prowled up and down the quaint, picturesque streets day and night. O Man's father died. The brother died. And when she and O Man were literally starving the mother, seeing nothing before her but death or the infamous flower boats, gathered her baby to her breast, and carried him to the Chinese house of mercy, and laid him in the baby-inviting basket that hung on the wall of the building. The now weighted basket slid through a cleverly contrived aperture in the wall and into the house. A bell rang. A kind-faced Chinese woman hurried to the child, and O Man's thread of life was taken up by the hands of Charity. And his mother walked unsteadily to the river.

A few weeks later Mr. O, who had many daughters, but no son, adopted the child with all due Chinese form and ceremony; and now the foundling calls him "father," worships at the ancestral tablets of the great house of O, and hopes to some day be a mandarin, if only of the ninth rank.

LI LOO.

"The sweetest little maid that ever crowed for kisses."

Her home is in Canton, but I first met her in Hong Kong. She had come there on a floating Chinese palace —her father's junk. He is a mandarin of the second rank, and she is his favourite child. He is very rich, and in China wealth means wealth. She lives a life of luxury. Already she has jewels and hair ornaments that are worth

thousands of pounds. Not such jewels as the European feminine covets, but curious, quaint ornaments of jade and pearls, and of other dull moon-like gems that Chinese women affect, and that Chinese men admire above all others. She has twenty pairs of embroidered satin drawers, and almost as many elaborate, satin, finely accordion-pleated skirts, at least she had when I knew her five years ago. She had a set of silver nail protectors set with turquoises and garnets, for on three of the fingers of her right hand her nails are never cut, but are rubbed with oil and fed at the roots with rich ointment, that all the world may know that she does no work, but has servants and slaves to do her every bidding.

The mandarin buys her a new set of the costly nail shields at least once a year, for her little pink and yellow fingers are allowed to grow freely. But not so her feet! Oh, her poor little feet! wee, crushed, crumpled, deformed "golden lilies." But how proud she is of them! They never hurt her now, she tells me; but they did hurt her terribly at first; and one of the first things she remembers is crying with pain and pulling on a tiny opium pipe when she was a very, very little girl. Her mother sat beside her and smoothed her hair, and nursed the throbbing little feet, and explained to her what a very great beauty the wee "golden lilies" were, and what an advantage to a woman all through life. And her father's concubine sat at some little distance off, and played tinkly music upon the absurd little inlaid guitar Li Loo's mother had given her (the concubine) on the last Chinese New Year's Day. And the concubine sang shrill little Chinese love songs, but very much expurgated and whitewashed editions—such as were fit for a Chinese baby maiden's little jewelled ears.

Li Loo's father is an exemplary husband, and the fondest, most indulgent father I ever knew. But he likes his concubine to sing him very racy love songs with her racy little, artificial, thread-like voice and her racy little crimson lips, to the accompaniment of the rakish-looking little instrument that his wife had given her as a token of good-will. And a racy Chinese song is very racy indeed. And while the concubine sang to Li Loo and played, her mother (Li Loo's mother), the mandarin's "number one wife," told fascinating and wonderful stories of famous Chinese beauties and virtuous Chinese wives who had been superlatively small of feet; and she repeated to Li Loo all the marvellous tales that Chinese grandams tell of the origin of the adored "golden lilies." And all this was to help Li Loo to forget her pain, and bear patiently the cramping and the aching of her poor little feet.

But now Li Loo's feet have quite forgotten how to ache. Indeed, I think that they have even forgotten that they are feet. They've been so praised, and admired, and pampered that they have grown arrogantly vain, and only think of themselves as sacred golden lilies, things of vast importance, to be waited upon and *kow-towed* to. They never by any chance think of themselves as feet, useful, ordinary things to be walked upon. But for all that they are walked upon a good deal, for Li Loo is a cheery, active little thing—wonderfully so for a high-born Chinese lady. She runs about her father's *yamen* and his gardens, and the deck of his splendid, carved, fantastic junk, faster than I could. She has many a game of shuttlecock, and balances herself beautifully upon one foot, while she uses the other as a battledore. She made me play with her

once, and how she laughed at my lumbering awkwardness! She was as full of mischief as any monkey; and so most Chinese children are.

The methods of feet-binding differ in the different parts of China. It is a peculiarity of the Cantonese small-footed women that they can move about alone and swiftly. There are districts in China where the small-footed woman cannot walk at all, or at the utmost can only limp a few steps with difficulty and assistance. In these parts of China the women of the "golden lily" order are carried upon the backs of their *amahs* or body servants. And in those parts it is unusual for the parents of poor children to bind their daughters' feet. But in Canton and many other districts it is the commonest sight to see small-footed women among the poorest classes. Nor is it quite uncommon to see them among the hardest working classes. I myself had an *amah* in Shanghai whose foot was not much larger than my big toe; yet she went up and down stairs easily, if not rapidly, and carried twenty odd pounds of a European baby for hours daily. And once in Hong Kong I saw a small-footed coolie woman breaking stones on the street. But in all parts of the empire it is chiefly the daughters of the affluent whose feet are bound, and it is rarely indeed that a girl with "golden lilies" is destined for a life of the hardest form of drudgery.

Li Loo can dance. I have seen her do it. Not set, prearranged dances! No virtuous woman does that. And Li Loo would not be allowed to execute the strange little impromptu fantasies she does were she not a very spoiled Chinese baby indeed, and the absolute tyrant of the doating old mandarin. When I first saw her dance it was in

the sunshine of her father's garden, and standing on the threshold of a grotesque summer-house. There were finely carved dragons on the little building's roof; some that were lacquered a beautiful crimson, some in rich natural colours of Chinese and Korean woods. The sides of the pavilion were open and half curtained with jessamine and drooping ropes of purple and white wisteria. Outside the door dozens of porcelain tubs stood, tubs filled with dwarf oranges and stunted oak trees. Over all and through all fell and streamed the yellow sunshine. It danced about dancing Li Loo, and absolutely seemed to laugh with the laughing child, and lingered lovingly about the queer little figure, the little ten-year-old Chinese maiden, with her inch and a half long red-clad feet, her green satin, pink-peony embroidered trousers, and her short, but much pleated, lightly spangled skirt, her big brave jacket of violet satin, a mass of bright blue embroidery and gold and silver threads, and sleeves almost as big as Li Loo herself. That was five years and more ago, and I can see her yet.

She wore a costly pin of emeralds in the twisted braids of her black silken hair. And one wee yellow ear was pressed just a suspicion further from her head than was natural, softly thrust aside by a rather sizeable bunch of tiny, fragrant, buff-coloured *Olea fragrans* buds. The flowers were fastened above her left ear by a costly "stick pin" of pale green jade.

As she danced her father's wife, and her father's mother, and her father's concubine turned aside and pretended not to see what was going on, and so did everyone else there, except the mandarin and myself. I was delighted, and watched the odd, pretty, gleaming creature greedily. The

mandarin smoked his long silver pipe, and watched her through his half-closed eyes and smiled. At last her mother turned to check her; but he intervened. "Let do! let do!" speaking out of courtesy for me in English, which his wife could not understand. But she understood his tone and gesture, and turned away at once, becoming again obligingly blind. I do not know how the mandarin would have got out of it had it been his mother and not his wife who started to object. A Chinaman may not check his mother; he must treat her with ceremony, reverence, and obey her. Yea, though he be the Emperor! "She is young," he added to me, "and it is beautiful that that she makes." "I'm afraid we're very depraved, you and I," I replied. He knew that I loved the child, and I knew that he knew it, and that, because he knew it, I dared say any impudent thing I liked to him. He looked towards his womenkind and smiled indulgently at them, then shook his head and answered, "No, not depraved, but travelled." And, indeed, he knew many parts of Europe and America as well as I, who have been travelling all my life; and Asia he knew far better. "In some few years I must give her in marriage," he added with a sigh, "but I shall choose with great care. She shall go to no man who will not be kind to her, and who has not broad sense." And the old mandarin frowned profoundly. And I thought, "It will go hard indeed with any husband who illuses the old man's idol, or causes tears of bitterness or regret to profane those plump, peachy cheeks, and streak the brilliant white and carmine of their post-nuptial paint." And I am glad to remember that I thought so. For Li Loo is fifteen now, nearly sixteen. High time that she were "woo'd and married and a'"; high time that she were locked into

the flower-decked, red-lacquered "joy-chair," and amid the blare of tom-toms borne upon the shoulders of four brawny and bravely liveried servants to the home of her new master. May he be half as good to her, as indulgent, as sympathetic, above all as "travelled," of mind if not of person, as was the master of her happy childhood. As I write I realise that Li Loo's wedding-day must be very near indeed at hand. And I am glad to remember what her father, the mandarin, said that yellow, sunshiny day, when Li Loo danced in the warm glittering light, and we sat and watched her—and loved her.

Swift and sure of foot as Li Loo is, she never walks beyond her father's grounds. That would be very bad Cantonese form indeed. She is the small-footed daughter of a blue-buttoned mandarin, and though she's as sweet as any yellow pomegranate, she knows her rank, and holds it with a baby-dignity as splendid as it is amusing. When she goes abroad she is carried in a palanquin, bedight with tinsel and flowers, and silken cushions and curtains of brocade; or she is carried by one of her *amahs*. She has three *amahs* or maids; meek, cheery, willing creatures, big and broad of back and foot. When in the public eye, or in a formal mood, she mounts on to the back of one of these servitors, clasps her legs about the servant's waist—taking great care to display to the best advantage her "golden lilies." She clasps her arms about the *amah's* neck, taking again great care, this time to display well her pretty, jewelled, yellow hands. Then she digs her little gilded heels gently into her bearer's sides, and cries out a queer little Chinese word that, briefly speaking, means "Get up." She was riding so when I first saw her in the public gardens of Hong Kong. A liveried

servant followed, carrying the gaudy cage, whose feathered denizen was the especial pet of Li Loo at that moment, and without which she never deigned to go abroad. This was not a striking eccentricity on her part; for many a Chinese greybeard has his pet bird, and carries it about with him wherever he goes. At the garden's gate eight gorgeous coolies waited with two very gorgeous chairs. One was Li Loo's. One bore the crest of a blue-buttoned mandarin, and by Li Loo's side marched the most abject and the most willing of her slaves, the mandarin himself.

I was only able to make Li Loo's acquaintance after being vouched for by the "number one wife" of a mandarin of the very highest rank. Li Loo's father was a blue-buttoned mandarin. There is one higher mandarin rank, and one only, the red button. Li Hung Chang is a red-button mandarin, and so is that very delightful person, the recent Chinese minister in London. We soon grew friends, the little Chinese girl and I. She was curious about the far Europe in which her father had travelled, and I was immensely interested in the beautiful country of her birth, and, besides, neither of us were indifferent to the strange fact that we had one name in common. For my part I felt very honoured, quite decorated in fact. The mandarin often called her "Loo," and I shall never forget how her round yellow face broadened, how her slanting, almond-shaped eyes danced, how her pearls of teeth gleamed, and how she clapped her hands when she heard a near friend call me "Lou." "You 'Loo'? You 'Loo,' too? You, old 'Loo'?" she cried in her pretty, broken English, which was no more rude than untrue—for in China the greatest compliment you can pay a woman is to call her old.

Li Loo knew a limited amount of comparative English. But she learned very rapidly, and a year ago she actually sent me a letter of fifty words—a letter that began, "Profoundly respected dear old Loo."

Dear little human rose. She was as jolly a little soul as I ever knew, and quite one of the most splendidly dressed. It will add, I hope, to their interest, that Li Loo sent me the pictures illustrating this chapter. She sent them in reply to a letter in which I wrote her, over two years ago, that I intended writing a book about the babies of the world, and greatly wanted pictures of genuine Chinese children. I wish I had a good picture of Li Loo. But I have only one, and it is not in the least like her; for all that it was painted on finest rice paper and by three renowned Cantonese artists.

THE BINDING OF LI LOO'S FEET.

"Kings shall be thy fathers and queens thy nursing mothers."

As a rule the feet of a Chinese girl of rank, or of one destined to be a beauty, are first bound when she is between six and seven years old. But in very wealthy families the feet of the baby girls are often bound as soon as they begin to walk. The earlier it is done the less they suffer, and the smaller it is possible to keep the feet. On the other hand, the less likely are they to learn to walk at all well, and the more likely to contract one of the diseases of the feet, which, though by no means so usual as Europeans seem to think, yet do sometimes follow the cruel deforming. Of course the girl, whose feet are cramped before she has learned to use them or to wait upon herself, never learns to do much for herself,

and must have the services of at least one attendant much earlier and far more constantly than need the girl whose first six or seven years of life are free-footed.

Li Loo's feet were bound when she was only three, and she must have been a very little child indeed on that day, which is the first day she remembers—the day when her mother comforted her and told her wondrous tales, and her father's concubine twanged upon the white guitar and sang sweet, shrill songs.

Is some English reader shocked at the word concubine? Madame, I am forced to use it. I cannot write about Li Loo, nor attempt to give any half-like picture of her life, without using and repeating it. It is not a select member of our English vocabulary, I admit. But I assure you, respected madame, that it is, when translated into Chinese, a word eminently *comme il faut*. Li Loo's father, the mandarin, had more concubines than one; as a blue-button mandarin should. One (the one of whom I have spoken) was more *en évidence* than the others when I knew the Li's. I studied the subject earnestly, and I came to the conclusion (which I still believe was a sound conclusion) that she owed her supremacy to the fact that Mrs. Li and Li Loo liked her more than they did her sister concubines. Of this I am sure: his "number two" wives, and his concubines, and his handmaidens sum-totalled were of less interest, less importance to the mandarin, than was the long, polished, spirally-coiled, silver-shielded nail of Li Loo's right hand's little finger. This too, I know; any one of those ladies, or the whole collection of them, would have been banished, not only apparently, but really, had Li Loo so willed it. But such an idea never entered her gay little raven-haired, jade-

decked head; nor ever had entered, nor ever could enter, the matronly brain of Mrs. Li, Loo's mother. Loo would have felt and resented any diminution of Li's *cortége de dames* as a family degradation — the loss of a social yellow jacket. It was inevitable for Loo to think so.

Such has been the trend of feminine thought in China for many centuries. It is not true that there is nothing either "good or bad, but thinking makes it so"; but there is a great deal of truth in it. Li Loo thinks no evil of her father's concubines. Neither does Mrs. Li. They look at the matter from a standpoint very different from any that could present itself as tenable to a European. It is a standpoint from which the *pros* and *cons* of morality are not searchingly looked at. It is a standpoint not briefly explicable. It is a standpoint of Tartar-Mongolian feudalism, a standpoint of family pride, a standpoint of ancient and revered race tradition. And so Li Loo and Mrs. Li, like the second-class (but, mark me, by no means *déclassé*) members of Li's household, treat them with much kindness, and take great pride in them—pride in their quantity and quality, and most especially in their fine clothes. I have heard Mrs. Li insist to her husband upon the purchase of a new jewel for this handmaiden, and a new set of embroidered satin trousers for another. I can't imagine anyone having the bad taste to offend Li Loo. But I am sure that any "number two" wife who did, or who was obnoxious to the spoiled child, would be gently but firmly dropped over the edge of the mandarin's junk, and left to expiate her folly or misfortune in the depths of the Chinese Yellow Sea.

Europeans are apt to speak of the deforming of the feet of the Chinese women as a Tartar innovation. I myself

have heard a gentleman who occupies a prominent chair at one of our chief Universities gravely inform a dinner table (or rather the attentively listening people who surrounded it) that when the Tartars conquered China they compelled the Mongolian men to let their hair grow and wear it in queues, and compelled the women to bind their feet—both as signs of submission and servitude. That is ridiculous nonsense. The queue of which every Chinaman is so proud was prescribed for his ancestors by the conquering Tartar, and worn as a sign of submission; but to say that the "cramped feet" came in at the same time and for the same reason is really going quite as far along the primrose paths of ignorance and absurdity as any self-respecting college professor ought. In the first place, it is a historical fact, clearly and unimpugnably proven, that the Chinese women bound their feet long before the Tartar invasion. In the second place it has never been a universal custom this deforming of the feet. It is not compulsory, but is left entirely to the discretion of each girl's parents. The wearing of the queue is almost absolutely universal, the only exceptions that I know to the rule that all men shall wear it being the Buddhist priests and the Emperor. It is not yet three hundred years since the Tartar mounted the throne of China. It is firmly established that there were many "small-footed women in China at least nine hundred years ago, and probably long prior to that."

The Chinese themselves have no real consensus of opinion as to when, how, or why the custom was introduced. Some Chinamen will tell you that it was done to keep the women at home, to prevent them from running about to gossip with each other and be gazed at by men.

Other Chinamen say that it is a sign that a girl has been born into a life of luxury and never need work. The fact that many small-footed women do work in no way gainsays this theory. In all nations there are among the labouring classes some who will ape the habiliments and the social insignia of the leisured class, even though doing so obliges them to economize cruelly in food and other scarcely less necessary essentials, and interferes with their work. If the *prima donna* wears diamonds, the ballet-girl wears paste. If the lady wears big satin sleeves, the lady's maid wears bigger sleeves of sateen. Still others among the Chinese regard the small feet as a badge of beauty pure and simple, and believe that the binding is done, and always has been done, solely to enhance the girl's loveliness, and to augment her price in the marriage market.

As to the particular incident that led to the institution of the custom, I have heard at least a dozen legends (and doubtless there are many more), each firmly credited by numbers of Celestials. One of the most popular, and one that most struck my fancy, was first told me by Li Loo herself. It was her favourite theory, too, the one she had most often asked her mother to repeat, when that lady had tried, by the telling of strange tales, to divert the child's mind from the pain of her newly bound feet.

I was Li Loo's guest at the Li Yamen in Canton. She sat upon a low stool of carved black wood. Her long black braids (which she must not bind about her head until she is married or betrothed) swept down and lay upon the highly polished floor of red cherry-wood. On a very low little oblong table of red lacquer work lay her fan and her wee silver pipe, and a tray bearing two tiny cups of steaming, straw-coloured tea. An *amah* knelt by

the table, busy filling and refilling the thimble-sized cups of porcelain from a silver pot, which another *amah* was busy bringing back and forth. The window was open, and through it blew a gentle breeze and crooning sounds of far-off country life, mingled with the busy buzz of near Canton. Through the fantastic bamboo lattice work of the balcony railing we could see a singularly fanciful pagoda's shaft, and the crimson cornice of a gorgeous temple.

Li Loo threw one satin-clad leg over her other satin-clad leg's knee, took one magnificent, minute foot in both her little jewelled hands and nursed it lovingly, and told me the story of the Emperor Yangte's golden-lily-footed love. I will tell you the gist of what she said, and not what she did say. That would take too long and be most tedious. Shè spoke a fair amount of broken English by this time. I could stumble through a few elementary phrases of Chinese. We both were rather fluent in that linguistic abomination "Pigeon English," which we both despised, and only used when all else failed. And so we patched our conversations together and got hold of each other's ideas as best we could. This is what Li Loo told me :—

In the year 600 of the Christian era there lived the most beautiful woman China has ever known. Her face was round as a full moon, and the colour of the yellow jasmine flower. Her eyes were narrow, mere slits of gleaming black between her plump, pink, blue-veined lids. She was the favourite concubine of the Emperor Yangte. He cared more for her than he did for all else in China, save the tablets of his ancestors. Her hair jewels, her stick-pins, her pipes of gold and silver, her jewelled fans, her satin garments embroidered with precious threads and

gems, her vases and cups and caskets of costliest jade, her winter garments of finest fur or of priceless feathers, were worth the value of a prosperous province.

This favourite, whom her Imperial master called the "coral button of his heart's core," had wonderfully small feet. The Emperor counted them her chief beauty, and lavished costly jewels on her for the adorning of her shoes. One day it occurred to Yangte that what were now by nature so beautiful might by art be made still more beautiful. And he bade the "coral button of his heart of hearts" bind her feet. She obeyed him far more implicitly than he had intended. She ordered her women to bend her four toes back upon the soles of her feet. And until they grew into the flesh of her feet (as Li's are grown into hers), and ceased to pain her, she smoked opium incessantly. Then, when what she had planned was performed, and only the big toe remained to do duty as a foot, she had a baby pair of gem-encrusted shoes made, and putting them on went to the Emperor. He was enchanted no less with her devotion and her heroism than with her delightful little feet. He decreed that upon the sole of every shoe thereafter made for her the fac-simile of the lotus flower, or sacred Chinese lily, should be stamped with a deep-cut die; that whenever she deigned to step upon the earth the impression of a lotus should be stamped upon the ground, and that all men seeing it might say, "The mistress of the Emperor has been here." And so women have been called "golden lilies" in honour of Yangte's favourite concubine for over thirteen hundred years, women who, like her, have had their feet bound up. And the peculiar tottery gait of the small-footed, a gait which is in Chinese eyes the acme of feminine grace, is com-

pared by the Chinaman of to-day as Yangte compared it thirteen centuries ago—to the exquisite swaying of a blossom-heavy flower in the soft sighing of the summer wind.

This was but one of many quaint tales that Li Loo told me as we sat together on the red, glass-like cherry-wood floor, and drank countless thimblefuls of pale tea. But time, which is of no value in eternal China, time and space, the whip-in-hand tyrants of momentary Europe, bid me halt. Some time in the future perhaps (I say perhaps, for oh! the morrows that never come) I may gain an opportunity to write more of Li Loo. For there are many things that I could still tell about my little friend—things quite as interesting and far less painful than the binding of her feet.

I ought never to introduce into a volume which deals with several peoples a chapter on China or on things Chinese. For when I come to the writing of that chapter I invariably wish that I had left all the others unwritten, that I might have had the more space, all the space, for China. Now at the close of a disproportionately long chapter, quite the longest of all these on children, I am overwhelmed with the things that I have left unsaid—even unreasonably so. No one can, in a few pages, deal adequately with a huge subject. No one is expected to. It is, I think, rather a cheap affectation to apologise for not doing so. But my interest in and liking for the Chinese is so sincere that the things I wish to say about Chinese children, but must leave unsaid, press me to a genuine feeling of guilt.

Of the shortcoming of the quality of my work no one

else can be so conscious as I. But I am usually able to endure my own shortcomings, both personal and literary, with much *sang-froid*, placidity, and resignation. I have written inadequately of the children of the different nations. I wish that I might have written more wisely, more adequately, and more convincingly. But I could not. I have written with much care and all love. I have done my work as well as I could. There the matter rests, and I rest. But the inadequacy of this, my chapter about the children of China, appals me. This is not so much because I take a peculiar interest in the Chinese as because I am convinced that on no other commensurate subject is the Occident so stupendously ignorant as on China and the Chinese. And European misunderstanding of the Chinese is ten times greater than is European ignorance of them.

You can count upon hearing a greater number of stupidities and crass misstatements made about China, in a given space of time, by Europeans of culture and catholicity, than about any other important subject under the sun.

Next to, and closely akin to, our banal misconception of the position of woman in China comes our misunderstanding of Chinese family life and paternal love and responsibility. I am not mad enough to beg the majority, even of scholarly Europeans, to earnestly and unprejudicedly study the Chinese. But I suggest that we suspend judgment and muzzle tongue and pen, unless our knowledge of them is, though meagre, sound and unbiassed.

Chinese home life is admirable. And if the Chinaman has an extreme view of filial duty, he has an as extreme view of paternal.

Confucius dwelt repeatedly upon the obligatoriness of

reciprocity in all approximately perfect family relations, and reiterated tirelessly, that those who would have filial loyalty and devotion must earn it by worthy and unselfish paternity.

Confucius taught, and still teaches (for his voice is heard in China yet), that the only anxiety a child should ever, under any circumstances, cause its parents is the anxiety arising from illness.

A Chinese child should not refer to old age in the presence of aged parents or grandparents, lest they be reminded of the debt which they must pay—probably soon. "This is a point strongly insisted upon" (I quote Prof. Robert K. Douglass), "and every boy has held up to him, as an example to be followed, the conduct of Laou Lai-tsze, who, fearing that the recognition by his parents of the fact that he was seventy years old would remind them of their own great age, used to dress himself in a child's frock and play about the room like an infant."

To attribute more than his real age to a Chinaman is to compliment him. It is only when age approaches the probable limits of life that it should be ignored.

Let me glean another significant sentence or two from Professor Douglass' translation of the edicts of Confucianism:—"But while it is incumbent upon a son to obey the wishes of his parents, it is also part of his duty to remonstrate with them should they act contrary to the rules of propriety.

"Filial piety follows on the display of sympathy from the parents."

And in the scriptures of Taouism—*The Book of Rewards and Punishments*—the Chinese are enjoined: "Have pity for orphans, and show compassion to widows."

"Respect old men, and cherish infants."

"Behave wisely towards your wife and sons."

In his wonderfully clear exposition of that appallingly intricate system of ethical philosophy, Confucianism, Professor Douglass writes:—"But at the root of all family ties is the relation of husband and wife, which is as the relation of heaven and earth. On this subject Confucius was singularly silent, possibly because his own married life was unhappy. A man who is compelled to divorce his wife is not likely to take a favourable view of women in general, and thus we find that Confucius looked upon women as necessary evils, who were to be endured only as possible mothers of men."

I am really inclined to believe that a not inconsiderable part of our all but universal misjudgment of the position of women in China has arisen from the caustic sayings of Confucius. He spoke of us sharply, bitterly, and terribly to the point. And such speaking is so delightfully quotable that it permeates into the veriest strongholds of alien and antagonistic ignorance. Confucius appeals to me—perhaps appeals to me most when he hits me hardest. I can't help it. And like Schopenhauer, he hits very hard indeed. And like Schopenhauer, his remarks about us are as trenchant as they are blistering, and must often ring as truth itself in the ears of any candid woman.

"Of all people," exclaimed Confucius, "women and servants are the most difficult to manage. If you are familiar with them they become forward, and if you keep them at a distance, they grow discontented." My experience coincides with that of Confucius.

Again I quote Professor Douglass. He is speaking of the sage:—"'A woman,' he said disparagingly, 'is unable

to stand alone, and therefore, when young, depends on her father and brothers; when married, on her husband, and after his death, on her sons.'" Personally, I emphatically agree with Confucius; but this time I absolutely fail to see where the disparagement comes in. The situation seems to me most creditable to all concerned. I like it. And it seems to me that Confucius only said—though with far less of tender beauty—what Mrs. Browning said in the lines with which I have prefaced this chapter. It is not always so with us in Europe; but, almost always, the Chinese woman is kept low and wise with the love and the loving of a masterful husband, and the clinging of chubby children. And to her wise lowliness we must largely attribute the general wholesomeness of Chinese home-life —and the happiness of Chinese children.

To assume that Chinese men undervalue either wives or children is, I think, to jump rashly at a raw and impotent conclusion. In the *Book of Poetry* it is asserted, "Happy union with wife and children is like the music of lutes and harp." Better that, if you can, bards of Europe.

That popular statement of ours that Chinese wives are unloved and Chinese children neglected is the wildest of absurdities. Over and over again the more stringent of the Chinese teachers and leaders have cried out that the men of China were letting their love for wife and children surpass their love of country, love of kindred, their love of Emperor, and even their love of heaven and hope of immortality.

"You claim a great deal for the Chinese! What about the concubines?" was the question hurled at me recently across a rather mixed dinner table, at which I had not so much as mentioned anything or anyone Oriental. The

subject is one that I need not dwell upon at length here, though it is one connected somewhat intimately with the home life of Chinese children. Chinese concubinage is an institution which we can understand but dimly, and only after long and unbiassed study. The class—the concubine class—exists everywhere. Personally, I consider those nations the more degraded and shameless who at the same time support and stigmatise that class. After all there is a virtue in giving a vice clean surroundings. Many a vice has grown a virtue through being able to hold its head up and walk freely in the free air. Virtue and health are far more attractive and far more contagious than vice and disease are.

The gravest menace to the children of China comes through the threatened partition of China and the misdirected efforts of the missionaries, and the general inability of those enthusiasts to really understand the Chinese. I devoutly wish that missions to China might be suppressed for a few generations. Since that may not be, I earnestly wish that they might be left entirely in the hands of the Roman Catholics. I am in no way a Roman Catholic. But I most honestly believe that the Roman Catholic do a little more good and a great deal less harm than any other of our foreign missionaries. They are not all Father Damiens any more than all English nurses are Florence Nightingales. But almost universally a Roman Catholic priest (their missionaries are all priests) is a gentleman and something of a scholar. And in no other profession are good breeding and sound scholarship so essential as in the missionary profession.

It would be cowardly for me—a partisan of the partisans wherever China is concerned—to ignore the question of

Chinese infanticide. Professor Douglass, with all his profound knowledge of the Chinese and after all his long residence in China, confesses himself unable to hazard a surmise as to the prevalence or non-prevalence of infanticide in some provinces of China. Professor Douglass is, I think, the justest, the most clear-minded, and the most able living European scholar who has devoted much time, thought, and research to the Chinese. Where he will not venture a conjecture it would be more than impertinent for me to write authoritatively. But I doubt if infanticide is as prevalent in any part of China as it is reported to be. It is confined to those provinces where poverty is most grinding. This is conceded, I believe, by all who know China well, even by those who dislike her. It is a point upon which, if I remember, the author of *Society in China* is emphatic.

I went among the Chinese prepared, if not intending, to dislike them. I was in intimate touch in China with many amiable and educated people who disliked them. I studied them with industry and with honesty, and they taught me to like them cordially and to respect and admire them above most peoples. I am convinced that when a Chinese mother destroys her child she does it under the lash of terrible penury and entire despair, and out of a deep if terrible compassion.

One of the most emphatic commandments in *The Book of Rewards and Punishments* is, "Do not kill your children either after their birth or before they have seen the light." The murder of the unborn is, I believe, a crime from which the Chinese are, of civilised nations, uniquely free. And it is solely a civilised crime. Savagedom knows it not.

CHAPTER XIV.

CANADIAN CHILDREN.

"Baby-bird, baby-bird,
Ne'er a song on earth
May be heard, may be heard,
Rich as yours in mirth.

All your flickering fingers,
All your twinkling toes,
Play like light that lingers,
Till the clear song close.

"Baby-bird, baby-bird,
Your grave majestic eyes
Like a bird's warbled words
Speak and sorrow dies.

Sorrow dies for love's sake,
Love grows one with mirth,
Even for one white dove's sake,
Born a babe on earth."

I HAVE thought for years, and have, I fancy, said more than once in print, that the most delightful men in the world are Englishmen who have travelled. Children are all so delightful, that I am not quite sure, and I have thought of it often and intently, which race's little ones I think most pre-eminently delightful. English children always lose more, I fancy, than they gain by being born away from "home," or by living out of England; just as tender rose trees, though they may thrive in rank and brilliant luxuriance, lose something of their blossom's

CANADIAN BOYS WITH SNOW-SHOES

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perfume and delicacy when transplanted into an uncongenial though richer soil. England and English home-life are well-nigh ideal for babies and children. I refer, of course, only to the wee ones of the rich, the well-to-do, and those removed one degree at least from real want. It is hard to say in which part of our world destitute babyhood is best off; but of a surety it must be in a warmer climate than ours, where fruit is Baby's for the picking, and swaddling clothes and pinafores are a concession to narrow conventionalism, and no adjunct to either health or comfort.

After England, and in some ways before England, it is, I think, in Canada that Anglo-Saxon children thrive best —thrive best in every way—and grow nearest to that highest standard of manhood and womanhood which is not only Britain's greatest national pride, but also her greatest national strength.

I am writing here of Anglo-Canadian children. Of course, if I wrote by the card, I should devote a chapter headed "Canadian Children" to a discussion or description of the native—the Indian—children of Canada. And, after the Canadian papooses, the little French-Canadian folk have, upon any impartial pen, a claim equal to that of Canada's British children. And the children of Canada's French community are far more picturesque models for pen-pictures than are the British youngsters who "live down Montreal way."

I pass by the Indian children of Canada, because they and their doings I have included in the chapter I devoted to the children of the North-American Indians. Of the French-Canadian children I shall, I hope, write in a later volume.

It is rather pleasant, I think rather jolly, after peeping at so many foreign babies, to turn to the children of our kindred across the sea—children who speak our mother tongue, children who are cradled in the supreme shelter of our great flag.

Our children in Canada—those of the best class—lack, I think, something of the fine manners, of the unobtrusive *savoir faire*, and of the perfect balance of our children of the same class at home; but they lack it very slightly, often in an all but imperceptible degree; and in more than one way they excel all the children of other races or places that I have known.

They are far more like English children in England than are the children of the colonists of any other part of Her Majesty's foreign dominions. They have not become denationalised, or brash, as so many of the little Anglo-Australians and Anglo-South-Africans have. They have not become enervated, dictatorial, and selfish, as our children are so apt to do in India, in Egypt, in South America, and in Hong Kong. It is impossible for the wisest mother to rear her children altogether wholesomely where climate and Oriental servants combine to defeat her, to over-indulge those children, and to sap their mental, moral, and physical vigour. If English children must grow up out of England, Canada is an approximately desirable spot for the scene of their banishment. The social conditions and the physical habits, the outdoor life entailed by the climate and the topography of Canada, unite to form as nearly satisfactory a substitute for "dear old England" as Anglo-Saxon child can have.

I have often heard it said that the children of the United States and the children of Canada were very

much alike. They have points of resemblance. It would be difficult to name two things on earth that have no points of resemblance. It would be impossible to name two races that have not at least one characteristic, or half-characteristic, in common. All children have a great deal in common. But speaking within reasonable limits, typical United States children and typical Canadian children differ greatly, surprisingly so when we remember that they are next-door neighbours, speak one tongue, live mentally very much upon one literature, and are brought up in the same or kindred faiths, that they breathe, a great number of them, the same air, and see the same scenes, play under the same trees, pluck the same flowers, eat the same foods, and often have the same games.

The Canadian children have, so at least I think, almost all the admirable qualities, and none of the faults, of their little neighbours who dwell on the other side of Niagara. They have, of course, faults of their own, the little Anglo-Canadians. And there are several ways in which they compare unfavourably with the youngsters of the Stars and Stripes. But comparisons are odious, and I am not impartial, so I will say no more of what our Canadian children are like or unlike, but will try to tell what and how they are.

They are straight, strong, and fleet of limb. They are strong and clear of lung, a little loud, especially out of doors, but never shrill, of voice. They are expert at all our English games and at a generous dozen of their own. They skate—not a few, but all of them—skate for many months at a time. They are as accustomed to sleigh-riding as London children are to hansoms or 'buses. They go tobogganing, and whiz with impunity and safety

down dangerous hills—in dozens or individually—on little sledges, as much as a matter of course as a schoolboy of ten slides down his ancestral banisters to the terror of his mother and the profit of his tailor. They all play Lacrosse. I have seen a boy of four who was positively an artist with his ball and racket. They fish, they row, they camp out, the luckiest of them, every fall and summer. They fly kites, they swim, they go in for snow-shoe racing and for snowball tournaments.

They are wonderfully dexterous and able with snow and ice. Out of those cold materials they fashion many things, both odd and useful to themselves, and with an almost Eskimo-like ingenuity.

The children of the well-to-do Canadians adopt snow-shoeing as a sport. But those of them who spend their lives in the Dominion are almost sure to find the accomplishment a very useful, if not an absolutely necessary one. There are vast tracts of Canada in which, at certain seasons, snow-shoes afford the only possible means of locomotion. The railways become snowed up. Trains and villages are snowed in. Rivers are frozen and heaped with hills of treacherous, drifting snow. For miles and miles it is snow—snow everywhere. The surface of that snow is frozen, but the crust is thin and treacherous. No horse can travel over it, and no ordinarily shod human body. By the use of snow-shoes, and by that means only, are the inhabitants able to reach each other, to perform necessary journeys, and often to obtain necessary food or fuel.

Snow-shoes are Indian contrivances, and are a never-dispensed-with possession of every Canadian "brave" and trapper. And many of the Indian squaws and children

use them. Thus an entire tribe is able to shift over many miles when otherwise it must have stopped where it was and perished.

Our little Canadian owns a pair of moose-skin or doe-skin moccasins as surely as he owns a pair of snow-shoes. Such moccasins are indescribably soft and warm footgear. A moccasin is neither a shoe nor a stocking; yet it is both. It looks like both, takes the place of both, and is a cross between both. The moccasins protect the snow-shoer's feet from the extreme cold, and from the ice and snow over which he glides. His feet are lashed into his snow-shoes with thongs of deer-skin. The shoes are over three feet long as a rule; often they are much longer. They are from a foot to a foot and a half wide at their widest. The framework is usually of pliable but strong strips of hickory. The toes are snugly tucked into a net of their own—an aperture in the front of the shoe—but the heel is left a comparatively free member. And a very expert member does it usually become, the heel of a constant snow-shoer. I knew a little English lad in Montreal who could, I am sure, have played the piano with that part of the anatomy which betrayed Achilles, if the youngster had only had a few more. Snow-shoes look very light, but they are large, and the lightest pair I ever saw weighed a pound and three-quarters.

The Indians decorate their snow-shoes beautifully, and the little Anglo-Canadians usually have theirs gay with crimson tassels or balls of wool. I knew a rather vain little Miss in Ottawa who insisted upon having her balls of silk. It was her first taste of Canadian life. Of course she came home from her first trial trip with her pretty garnitures quite irremediably ruined. After that she con-

tented herself with dangling ornaments of gaudy wool balls and tassels, such as the other children used, and that would dry and retain their colour after their contact with all the snows of all the Canadas. So little London-born-and-bred Maud learnt the first lesson Canada had to teach her—an extremely salutary lesson for any young colonial, or anyone else for that matter, to learn—a lesson that comes very hard to most Anglo-Saxons, the lesson of adapting herself and her adornments to her altered surroundings and to the new conditions of her new home.

I recently read a book written by a woman who wears a coronet, and who was born of coroneted parents—a woman who had lived much in Canada. It is not a well-written book. More than once it plays traitor to the Queen's English in an unequivocal way that would be unpardonably disloyal, not to say illiterate, from the pen of a commoner. This work has absolutely no place in literature, in which respect it falls beneath a score of "penny dreadfuls" that I could name. The author tells the same thing over and over again, and always in the same way, until the reader grows weary, then impatient, then amused, and at last quizzically demands, "How long, madame, oh, how long will you harp upon that inconsequential and purely personal item?"

She, the author, states but few facts (though her volume is the record of her journeyings over many unbeaten paths), and the facts she does state are repeatedly in part or in whole wrong. Yet her book is delightful, readable, fascinating, likeable. And why? Because it is redolent of an evenly-balanced, good-natured, well-developed personality, and of a sound, though by no means great, a sweet, but not in every sense fine, mind in a sound, sweet

body. She did almost all the things that are wholesome for a gentlewoman to do—did them as a matter of course, did them well, and did them with a gusto. She skated, she drove, she swam, she gardened, she tobogganed, she did fifty other wholesome things. And it is just this—this wholesomeness of person and healthiness of life—that is the chief, the most delightful, characteristic of Canadian children.

The children of Canada inherit an intense love of out-door sports from their English ancestry. Their life, from its early dawn till boyhood or girlhood is swallowed up in the graver cares and responsibilities of man and woman-hood, is one of constant, hilarious, and joyful exercise. They live much out of doors, and this in the midst of vigorous winter, as well as in the genial and sometimes scorching days of midsummer. Inheriting a disposition for sport from the mother country, they have, owing to the difference of climate, sports almost unknown in England, or, if practised there at all, practised in a homœopathic or altogether artificial manner.

It is an interesting fact that the two great dependencies of Great Britain — the Dominion of Canada and the Australian colonies—are both keener in the pursuit of sport than Englishmen at home. In Australia sport is a mania, in Canada it is often a passion. The two most phenomenal oarsmen of modern times were Hanlan and Searle. The former was a Canadian, the latter a tawny farmer's lad of New South Wales. Hanlan learned to row upon the broad smiling waters of Ontario; Searle acquired his matchless style and unconquered stroke upon the swift but silent Paramatta. Hanlan and Searle are but adult developments of the children of Australia and Canada. In

Canada the boys and girls do almost everything that it is well for children to do, and the result is admirable. It toughens their bodies, it begets within them an indomitability of spirit worthy of the race of which it has been said, "They die, but never surrender."

Many Canadian children are well taught, as book-teaching goes, many are not; but almost all of them are excellently taught in a lore far above that of books. Fortunately there is culture of the heart as well as that of the head, and there is, too (perhaps best of all), culture of the body. And the child whose body and heart are perfectly, or almost perfectly, cultured can be happy and useful, and make others happy, with comparatively little culture of the head.

Canadian children live among the snow and the flowers, among incomparable rocks and soft, purling brooks. They hear the birds sing, they see the lightning flame and flash as lightning never yet in England did. They pelt each other softly with balls woven of wild flowers and moss, in summer. In winter, they sting each other with shot and shell of well-packed snow and ice. To be plainer, Canadian children see Nature in all her moods and tenses. They learn to read the lesson of life in her wonderful "primer"; they know each of that primer's letters, from the "forget-me-not" garlanded Alpha of her earliest spring to the icicle-hung Omega of her latest winter.

Learning to live in all weathers, and (I honestly believe) *because* they so learn, they also learn to live among all men, to adapt themselves to persons and things most antithetical. They learn to face the fierce Canadian winter and learn to bask in the sensuous Canadian summer; and

so learning, also learn to accept "fortune's buffets and rewards," if not "with equal thanks," at least with equal self-control and equanimity undisturbed; to love their friends as staunchly as they hate their foes, and to be "as up and doing" in all the swiftly shifting circumstances of life as they are in the sharply contrasted changes of Canadian climate.

Good breeding is more, I think, a matter of heart and person than of brain. It is perhaps because the little ones of Canada live such healthy lives, and are so surrounded with the heart-food of beautiful surroundings, that they have so high an average of good breeding. I do not know, but I have sometimes fancied it. Of this I am sure: they are the best bred of colonial children.

There is one thing even better than good breeding—loyalty. Of England's little ones across the sea, none others are, I think, so loyal to the old country as are the wee Canadians. I have heard "independence," "defiance," "separation," and all sorts of other fine-sounding names for ingratitude on the lips of schoolboys and girls in that "Greater Britain" which extends its borders through every sea. I have never heard such traitorous lispings from the mouth of a baby Canadian. I once heard some thousands of small Canadians sing "God save the Queen." I thought then, and I think now, that because loyalty to England is bred in their bones, and because they are taught in their nurseries to sing and to feel "God save the Queen," the Canadian children have an admirableness and a strength that comes very near the admirableness and the strength of children British born and bred.

Sir John Macdonald said at a vital moment: "Canada will give her last man and her last dollar in defence of

the British Empire." 1897 was a vital year, in some ways —all of them beautiful—the most vital year in England's history; and I am sure that on June 20th Canada gave every baby voice, from Halifax to Vancouver, from Lake Ontario to Hudson's Bay, to swell the mightiest of mighty anthems, "God save our gracious Queen."

There is nothing in all England one half so sad as the cry of her children. That is as true to-day as when Elizabeth Barrett Browning made her great appeal, asked her terrible question, cried aloud her horrible impugnment:—

"Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers',
And that cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing towards the West.
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

* * * * *

But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."

Canada has never, since she became a part of Great Britain, turned a deaf or a heedless ear to the sobbing of England's poorest children. She has been a saviour to thousands and thousands of little English children, stretching out her arms to them, and saying, "Suffer them to come unto me." And they have been suffered, nay, sent by the boat-load, and Canada has received them (the waifs and strays of London, Glasgow, Dublin), fed

them, clothed them, and taught them to work *and to play*. I know of no holier charity on earth than that which sends children whose look-out in life in England is hopeless, from England to Canada—Canada, where their look-out in life is, to the brim, full of hope.

Every year English charity sends numbers of destitute children (ten pounds will send a child) to Canada, and Canadian charity takes those needy little ones into a sheltering embrace. They are adopted into respectable, prosperous farming families. They are lifted from the choked mire of London's East End into the broad, clean fields and forests of Canada. They are given a fair chance in life. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these little ones of mine, ye have done it unto Me." Inasmuch as Canada has saved thousands of Her Majesty's little ones, has Canada not done a holy office to her queen? I think so! I think that Canada has done her share, perhaps more than her share, to make Queen Victoria's reign the most righteous, the kindest in our annals.

The Canadian small boy, like his republican neighbour, is a great expert in fire-crackers. On "Dominion Day" he fires them almost as assiduously as Chinamen on their New Year's Day, and quite as incessantly as the small boy of the United States on the 4th of July. If I could dislike anything about small boys, I should dislike their propensity for fire-crackers. I dislike nothing; I like everything of and about all small boys. But I miss their fire-crackers less than I miss any other of the many splendid attributes of the boys of North America and of China.

"Dominion Day" is a great day for all Canadian

children. It is the day that marks Canada's individual existence as a distinct and sentient unit of the British Empire.

Among the games principally patronised by young Canadians are Lacrosse, cricket, and tobogganing. In some parts of the Dominion they also patronise "base ball," an importation from the United States.

Lacrosse, curling, and tobogganing may be safely declared to be the chief sports of Canada; add to these the delights of snow-shoeing and of sleighing in winter, and the joys of boating, fishing, and hunting in other seasons, and you have a list of the outdoor pleasures toward which the young Canadian instinctively turns for recreation. Lacrosse is played with rackets, like enlarged and elongated tennis rackets; a ball is tossed back and forth by the opposing sides, as in football, between two goals. The amount of skill displayed in catching the ball on the racket, and the strength displayed in throwing it great distances with unerring aim, is next door to the wonderful.

Every boy in Canada yearns to play Lacrosse, as every subaltern in India yearns to play polo. When the principal clubs play matches, enormous crowds gather to watch the sport, and the excitement and enthusiasm run high as the ball passes swiftly to and fro from side to side. I never went tobogganing. I fear I never wished to, but I find this confession in an old letter of Mr. Miln's, who never leaves anything of that sort undone:—"I shall never forget my first toboggan ride (of course I mean genuine tobogganing, not that bastard variety which prevails at Earl's Court and other caravansaries of joy). The day was bright, and the atmosphere so translucent that vast distances seemed as nothing. The thermometer

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marked thirty degrees below zero, and every feature of the landscape was mantled with pristine white, which glistened and scintillated in the morning sun till one's eyes blinked as though dazzled by a million diamonds. It was a merry, merry party, grown folks and little ones jumbled together in the democracy of pleasure. Everyone was wrapped in woven wool, or fur, the predominating colours being blue and scarlet, with here and there a softer pink or a darker shade of royal purple.

"It was a splendid 'slide,' at least, so I was told, as I climbed up what seemed to be an interminable hill. Surely no scene could be brighter or more joyful than that presented by the toboggans, full of happy children, as they flew shouting and screaming with joy through the wintry air.

"For my part, I stood shivering, in spite of my woollens and furs, awaiting my turn. I was, happily, under the escort of one of the most skilful tobogganists in Canada. There is nothing quite like it! Skating, riding a race-horse, even ballooning are tame and commonplace beside the wild exhilaration of tobogganing. A ride on the tender of the Scotch Express would approximate, but not equal the speed and the excitement. Every nerve tingles; eyes, hands, feet, every muscle in the body are awake and strained. The frosty air fairly takes away one's breath as the pace increases, till at last, as the greatest speed is reached, all calculation is banished, and one simply waits—waits for the inevitable! I was very lucky, for, escorted as I was, I escaped the almost inevitable 'spill,' and finished my first 'tobogganing' more pleased and excited than any young *débutante* returning from her first ball."

Take it all in all, whether we consider the homes, the schools, or the sports of the young Canadian, he is a being to be envied generally, and seldom pitied. And from this soil is growing up a splendid race of English subjects —full of energy and enterprise, and to the finger tips loyal to the English crown, with splendid schools, public institutions, and men closely allied to those of Great Britain.

On the whole, I think that the Canadian poet who wrote these lines to Canada did not over-boast; not more, at least, than is good form in poets and patriots:—

"True to themselves, thy children may defy
The power and malice of a world combined;
" While Britain's flag, beneath the deep blue sky,
Spreads its rich folds and wantons in the wind,
The offspring of her glorious race of old
May rest securely in their mountain fold."

CHAPTER XV.

SOUDANESE CHILDREN.

"Thy unripe youth seemed like the purple rose
That to the warm ray opens not its breast,
But, hiding still within its mossy vest,
Dares not its virgin beauties to disclose."

OUR study of the children of the world leads us now away from the haunts of civilised, or even of semi-civilised, child-life to the wild tribes of the Soudan. It is almost needless to say that between the lives of children living upon the burning sands or among the parched and barren rocks of that vast region of Africa known as the Soudan, and the lives of little ones living under conditions familiar to us in Europe, there is little or no analogy. At the same time as "boys will be boys," so "children will be children," whether they live in the monotonous streets of our cities or in the tents or rude huts of the desert and the Nile edge. They laugh and cry, they are dear to their mothers, and they learn the lesson of life with as little, and perhaps as much, pain and disappointment as do our own children.

If there is any class of child-life in England to which we may compare the child-life of the Soudan, it is the rough-and-ready existence of the children of our gipsies—now so rapidly disappearing altogether. But the children of English gipsies live in conditions of comparative ease and luxury if contrasted with the children of the Soudan.

Before describing in some detail the habits of some of the children of the Soudan and the sort of home-life they lead, it will be wise, perhaps, to glance rapidly at the territory in which they live. Although much has been written during the past few years about the Soudan, that "much" is indeed very little when compared with the vastness of the subject. What has been written chiefly concerns that portion of the Soudan which has been the scene of conquest and re-conquest by the troops of Egypt, officered by Englishmen and reinforced by English troops. Dongola, the cataracts of the Nile, and Khartoum are names familiar enough to every intelligent student of contemporary history; but, as compared with the Soudan as a whole, these names represent only a fraction of a vast country.

There are, in fact, two Soudans—the Soudan proper and the Egyptian Soudan. The former stretches from the Red Sea on the east to the Atlantic on the west, from Nubia and the vast Sahara Desert in the north to Guinea and the great plateau north of the Congo in the south. Most of this enormous stretch of country is to all intents and purposes a *terra incognita*. It is known to be densely populated, and mostly by Negro races. Indeed, the Arabic equivalent of the Soudan is "Beled-es-Sudan," which means "the land of the blacks." And so it is often called "Nigritia," or Negro-land. Of the Negro races inhabiting the Soudan not much that is definite is known. Negro kingdoms have been displaced from that portion of the Soudan with which we are more familiar—kingdoms in which a high degree of civilisation had been reached, judged from the standard of aboriginal races; and many such kingdoms still exist where the slave-driver has never yet ventured.

The Negro races of the Soudan are fine, tall, athletic creatures, coffee brown or ebony black of complexion, with woolly hair, and snow-white teeth. The children are like shiny balls of dimpled ebony; they laugh and chatter and show their glistening teeth, and seem glad to be alive. Like other Negroes, they are enthusiastic for music, and cherish a thousand superstitions.

The Arab and Moslem invasions of the Soudan have changed all that, so far as the Egyptian Soudan is concerned. The Negro has either been enslaved and driven away to bondage, or amalgamated with other tribes, till he is practically lost to the Egyptian Soudan, where he was once the chief inhabitant, a glad, careless, brave, and prosperous child of nature.

The Egyptian Soudan is that portion of the greater Soudan contiguous to the Nile and extending northward from Khartoum all along the river's course. It is this region of country which has been the theatre of savage strife between the dervishes of the Mahdi and the troops of Egypt and England. Its burning sands have been often soaked with English blood, and many an Englishman lies in a nameless but honourable grave within its borders.

Within the Egyptian Soudan are many different tribes. There are the Arabs, the Fulahs, and the Berbers, all of them, of course, strangers to the soil—strangers who have conquered the native Negroes and driven them out. The nondescript tribes in the Egyptian Soudan—wretched creatures composed of dirt, treachery, and dishonesty—are simply the resultants of amalgamation between invaders and invaded. The Arabs have kept comparatively free from intermixture, although it is noted that where

the Arab nature has been mixed with the Negro its characteristics have been quickened and enlarged.

Of all the children of the desert I know of none so interesting, both from the standpoint of the picturesque and also from that of gentleness, amiability, and fidelity, as the Nubians. Whether one finds him in the desert, working on the wharves of Alexandria, or toiling at some menial task in Cairo, the Nubian is always the same. He is honest, he is gentle in voice and manner, he is industrious. A striking peculiarity of the Nubian is his unfailing love and respect for his parents and his home. In the latter respect he is certainly pre-eminent. He is almost Scotch in his love of country and in his desire to return to it before he dies. Colonel Sir W. F. Butler, in his interesting story, *The Campaign of the Cataracts*, calls attention to this feature of Nubian character. The passage so savours of the desert that I cannot do better than quote it to illustrate my point. He is speaking of the secret charm and fascination exercised by the Nile, not only upon travellers, but upon those whose homes are beside its fertile waters, and says:—

"I do not think that secret is to be found in the memory of the bygone glory of the river, nor in the ruins which still stand to verify, even in their desolation, history which, without them, would read as fable, nor in the contrast between man's misery to-day and his magnificence in the past. These and more than these memories grow thicker than palm or mimosa on the shores, but they are sad as Nubia's twilight hour, which nowhere sinks upon the earth in light and shadow more intensely mournful. Nor yet do I think this secret charm is to be looked for in the contrast, ever in sight, between river

and desert, between the extreme of the dry and barren desert and the border of green which, though a fringe, is rich with the colour carried from a thousand tropic sources; but those who dwell upon the Nile literally live upon it—it is life. All else—the cloudless, rainless sky, the pitiless sun, the burning desert, the blighting breath of the simoon—these are death, death with the torment of thirst and hunger; but here, centred in a single stream, is every gift that shower, shade, and sun yield to man on the most favoured regions of the earth. It is this sole principle of life made ever present through every sense, that gives the Nile the power of tying to it the hopes, wants, and thoughts of its people, making the river the one central thought of home, which in other lands is diffused over many objects. So that, wherever the fortune or fate of the Nubian may carry him, his toil, his service, his self-denial, his hopes have but one object—to get back again to that fringe of life amid the sea of death which is his home!" Such is the concentrated potency of the magnet Nile.

Love of country and of home usually go hand in hand with filial devotion, and so we are not surprised to find the little Nubians both fond of their parents and obedient to them—a trait which clings to them through life. It is one of the prettiest of family pictures to see the father, mother, and four or five nut-brown Nubians playing together within the small enclosure outside the hut, all of them as free and as careless as if the father and mother were children too. The close community of parents and children seen among the different tribes of the Soudan characterises all their doings. At work or play, fathers and mothers, boys and girls, are as one in purpose. If the father climb the

baobab trees to collect their fruit and honey, on a neighbouring tree one sees his miniature climbing for the same purpose. They climb by driving stakes into the trunks at intervals, and as they climb they laugh and chatter like monkeys.

The children of the Soudan are simple in their tastes. A bauble, a few beads, a strip of scarlet cloth, the gilt paper taken from a champagne bottle, or the red capsule brand removed from a cork of St. Julien, will amuse, nay, delight, either child or man. Mr. James, who travelled extensively in the Soudan, speaks of having presented to a sheik's son a bit of maroon velvet, on which were fastened little silvery ornaments like buttons. The native at once turned it to account as a necklace, discarding one of dried palm leaf which was much prettier.

The little girls of these Soudanese tribes learn from their mothers, only the most meagre domestic accomplishments. They learn to crush millet, to mould it into cakes, and to bake them. They learn other similar rudiments of cooking, and there they stop; for they will never require to know more in that line. But what they do cook they cook well. They are all *gourmands*, and to a large extent *gourmets*. They do not learn to sew, because, as a rule, they have nothing to sew. A girdle about the loins, suspending an apron, is for many of them an entire wardrobe. One thing they can do, and do surprisingly well, and that is to carry water upon their heads. They are essentially a race of "drawers of water," and it is quite a picture to see three or four of the slender, straight, black bodies coming up from old Father Nile, carrying on their heads their waterpots, which they balance without a thought. When I first went to the East I was constantly

astonished at the graceful figures and splendid gait of the native women of the lower classes. It all comes largely from the habit of carrying burdens on their heads.

In many of the tribes the younger girls spend much of their time in plaiting, from the leaves of the *dhoum* palm, baskets, which, after being smeared with mud and dried, are quite waterproof. They often carry water in these; and then they carry a basketful of water suspended from each end of a pole, and borne upon the shoulder instead of upon the head, as in the case of single vessels. A Nubian boy, or indeed the boy of any of these Soudan tribes, is taught to regard his oath as sacred. They have various forms of pledging their honour, but once pledged, they rarely break it. They will lie, and steal, and cheat in a thousand ways, many of them; but once let one of them "take his oath," and he would sooner die than break it. One tribe will throw a stone as a sign of verity; another will swear by the bridle of the horse; another by the grave of some noted sheik; but once having been sworn, the oath is sacred. They have many other interesting and unique customs, whose origin it is often difficult to trace, owing to the mixed population of the country; but these will perhaps be cleared up now that the vast country our allied troops have restored to the Egyptian crown has been subdued to the flag of civilisation and progress.

I wish that I had enough space and (what I lack even more) enough knowledge to enable me to draw a comparison, if only one of meagre value, between the black children of the Soudan and the pickaninnies of the United States. It seems to me that their kinship must stand self-proved to the most untutored (if at all inquiring) European mind. And it seems to me that the many

salient traits that the black babes of the Soudan and the black babies of the southern of North America's United States have in common go rather far to prove that the seed is more than the soil in the world's great garden of human flowers. I lack both the space and the knowledge that I wish I had, but straws show which way the wind blows, and because they do it may not be altogether insignificant to mention some of the points of touch between the "darkie" children of the United States and the Negro children of the Soudan.

They both and all love "purple and fine linen," and hanker after the flesh-pots inordinately. They love beads —something bright and glittering to wear. They love honey and the honeycomb — something saccharine and luscious to melt within their mouths and trickle down their throats. They chatter with an industry that makes the magpie seem a bird of lazy voice. They love to dance, and dance heavily and grotesquely. They sing and touch their primitive instruments of primitive music with a plaintiveness and a gusto of harmony that is not to be learned in the *conservatoires* of Europe. Music is the ceaselessly rippling marrow of their bones. They are affectionate and affected. They are pugnacious, but not always brave; faithful as Newfoundland dogs; sensitive as monkeys. They are all this, and much more, in common. And it speaks eloquently, I think, for the inexhaustible individuality of the African blood that all the traits I have mentioned are strongly developed even in those children of the United States whose blood is but one-fourth (or less) African, and whose environment is wholly North American.

They are emotional, genuinely and theatrically so, the

black babies of the Soudan and the black babies of the United States. And they love to laugh even more than they love to dance, or sing, or eat, or sleep. They wallow in mirth, they rollick in sunshine.

Here is a brief picture, a hasty but clear sketch from the authoritative pen of Slatin Pasha. It might almost, in all essential respects, be a photograph taken in "the ole Virginie State." "In one village"—I need not pause to explain of what incident Slatin Pasha speaks—"the people were so completely surprised that few of them had time to fly; and seeing that they were only women I sounded the halt, in order to give them a chance of getting away. I then formed up the men on the road, so as to prevent them scattering through the village, and in this formation we marched on. One poor woman I noticed in her hurry to escape had left her two children on a rock, while she herself fled like a gazelle up the mountain-side. Going to the rock, I found two pretty little babies, quite naked, but with strings of coral round their waists and necks. They were as black as ravens, and probably twins about eighteen months old. Dismounting, I went up to them, and they began to cry and cling to each other, so taking them in my arms I told my servant to bring me some sugar from my travelling bag. This pacified them at once, and smiling through their tears they munched what to them was probably the nicest thing they had ever tasted in their little lives. Then taking two of the red handkerchiefs (a supply of which I usually carried about as presents), I wrapped the babies up in them and laid them down on the rock again and moved on some distance. Looking back I saw a human being, evidently the mother, creeping from the rocks. Then joyfully

seeing her little ones, whom she thought perhaps she had lost for ever, she fondled them most lovingly. She had got back her naked treasures clothed in lovely garments, and licking their little black lips all sticky with their feast of sugar."

I am inclined to think that "black lips" is a slip of the Pasha's pen, or of that of his translator. The lips of the Negro babies of North America are blatantly scarlet, and so too are, I think, the lips of the little Soudanese blacks; but in every other way the little picture is wonderfully convincing. No doubt they liked the sugar, the little African pickaninnies. There are no blacks the globe over that do not adore sweet things. In every part of the world where bees build their hives or nests in high trees you will find the native blacks (if there are any) climbing those trees, risking life and limb, if need be, for the sake of the sugary booty. To say that every boy in the black tribes of the Soudan will climb the tallest tree if it have honey in the clefts of its trunk is merely to say that he is a black boy, and lives in a part of the world where the trees are encrusted, if not flowing, with honey.

"Necessity is the mother of invention"—so the old saw goes. Popular sayings are usually popular misstatements; but there is one difference (minute, but significant and indicative) between the black children of North America and the black children of Africa. While they all make music,—instrumental music—it is the children of Africa, and the children of Africa only, that ever make musical instruments of any moment. Play they must, and play they do, the children of the rhythmic African blood. But in America, where they can beg, buy, borrow, or steal an instrument, they never try to make or manufacture one

of any greater significance than a willow whistle. In the wilds of the Soudan musical instruments cannot be bought, so every black boy in the Soudan learns to make them.

They not only learn to beat the war-drum, but they learn to make it. Strangely enough, the Soudanese boys make their drums very much as the boys of the North American Indians make theirs. Bark forms the drum's barrel-like frame, skins tightly stretched close its head and foot, and often a shallow compartment, skin-lined and water-filled, gives forth notes of liquid music which are perhaps only heard in or near the wigwams of the American Indians, the kraals of the Kaffirs, or the indescribable huts of the Soudanese.

One instrument, of mighty and sometimes horrid music, many, indeed most, Soudanese boys learn to make; I mean the Soudanese war-horn. They call it the *ombrya.* They make it of the tusk of the elephant, and it can be heard an almost incredible distance.

The Soudanese boy, speaking somewhat loosely, not as to the noun but as to the adjective, is taught much more than is the Soudanese girl. The Soudanese girl is taught to love and be loved, to bear and forbear, to carry, to tend, to watch, to wait. Well, a girl who learns that, and learns it thoroughly, is as well educated as any girl need be, in civilisation or out of it.

The only etiquette the Soudanese girls are taught is the etiquette of implicit obedience; but the Soudanese boys are taught many minute details of complicated—almost Oriental—etiquette. For instance, a Soudanese girl who would be faithful unto death and far beyond it, would not know any formal or conventional way to express her loyalty emphatically. A Soudanese boy

who meant to stand by you till death, to conquer with you, or die with you, would know that he could only properly prove the staunchness of his intended honesty and fealty by raising above and resting across his brows the most powerful and valued thing he possessed. A Soudanese boy who wishes to vow friendship or fealty will lift his rifle (if he has the good luck to own one), and by it vow that in his friend's cause or his own he will conquer or die.

Soudanese children are taught to believe in "medicine men" very much as the children of the North American Indians are taught. The children of the Soudanese blacks believe firmly in many of the monstrosities that are the backbone of the faith of the children of the American Indians. Why do children of such different peoples hold and cling to identical superstitions? Crass ignorance and superstition are narrow minded always, easily pregnant never. They bring forth but few ideas, and bring them forth in sore travail. They invent with difficulty; but they seize with avidity upon the absurdities already born of other ignorant and abnormal minds. And it is marvellous how falsehood and putrid superstition travel. They veritably seem blown by the winds, or carried in the beaks of mighty birds, from continent to continent, from hemisphere to hemisphere, as we know that seeds are; and falling upon the reekingly loamy soil of deformed minds, they take quick and sure root, and spread with the rank luxuriance of the deadliest weeds.

The children of the Bedeyats (one of the most interesting and unique tribes in the Soudan) are taught to pray to the sacred *heglik* tree, and sometimes to sacrifice to it. A huge tree with low-hanging and widespread branches

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is chosen, the ground about it is carefully swept and covered with the finest sand. Then the Bedeyat temple is prepared, ready for worshippers, old and young. The ground about the tree is kept scrupulously clean, and on it the Bedeyat children kneel and pray to "the unknown God."

The Bedeyat boys are taught to sacrifice animals with great pomp and circumstance at their religious feasts. These are verily "movable feasts" and do not fall upon prefixed dates; nor do they occur beneath or near the sacred *heglik* trees. They are always held upon the extremest and freshly-whitewashed summit of some high hill.

The Bedeyat children are handsome, if not fair, to look upon. They are very black, but straight and strong of limb, and fine—some of them almost classical—of feature. The girls are taught to take the greatest care of, the greatest pride in their hair; for the Bedeyat women are famed throughout the Soudan for the beauty and luxuriance of their long hair, and this is a matter of intense tribal pride. Boys and girls wear loin cloths of skin. The women and the men of rank dress in long loose robes of white.

The Bedeyat girls are taught to cook but one dish only, as a rule. "They take the seeds of the wild pumpkin, which grow there in abundance, and they soak them in wooden vessels made from the bark of trees. After taking the outer shells off they leave the seeds to steep until they lose their bitterness, and then, straining them off and mixing them with dates, they grind them into a sort of flour, which is cooked with meat, and forms the principal food of the country."

A Bedeyat boy is by no means sure to fall heir to his father's belongings. All the relatives carry the dead man to his grave, which must be some distance from his dwelling. After the interment a sign is given, and all the males rush madly towards the dead man's hut. He who reaches it first, and fixes his weapon into it, becomes the absolute owner of all the deceased's property. He may marry all the dead man's widows if he likes; but this law has one holy exception—a son may not marry his own mother.

Lord Kitchener has decreed that the Soudan shall be open to international trade, and its very land is now obtainable by all who have the wish and the means to buy it.

The telegram which conveyed this news to England took up but three lines of an evening paper, but of what vast import these three lines are!

To us, with our lusty and ever-growing family, the opening up of the Soudan means so much that, at first flush, that meaning is incalculable. It means more room in which to stretch our long Anglo-Saxon legs. It means new fields for British industry, space for British growth, scope for British energy. It means food for many British mouths, raiment for British bodies. Best of all it means room for British homes. Those blessed homes that, wherever they are, are always British. I have seen them outside the walls of Canton and in the shadow of Fusiyama. I have seen them at the Khyber's mouth, when a stray bullet whizzed near now and then. I have seen them almost on the slopes of Mount Everest and in the Cingalese jungle. I have seen them on the heights of Quebec and in Vancouver. I have seen them in Van

Diemen's Land and in hottest Queensland. I have seen them in Hong Kong when Hong Kong was aquiver with steaming, horrid heat and with plague. I have seen them in Karachi when Karachi was pestilent with cholera. I have seen them in Bombay when Bombay was a morgue and a hell, and the only peace within its gates was the peace of its dead. But I have never seen those homes except to see them in every detail, in every essential, British. We do not learn enough, we English, of the strange peoples among whom so many of us go to live. That's foolish always, and sometimes it's criminal. But we have a supreme and a superb virtue: wherever we live, however long we live there, we keep ourselves and our children and our homes English—quite English.

It used to be true that the pen was mightier than the sword and far more beneficent. But we are changing all that. Ours is the Victorian Era. Our swords are the swords of Wolseley, of Roberts, and of Kitchener.

Think of the sword of the Sirdar! It has spilt some blood—alas, yes! But that is the least that it has done. It has written "Emancipation," "Peace," "Security," "Civilisation," and "Benefaction" across the Desert. There are some drops of blood in the ink, but the ink is indelible and the writing is clear—the writing of the sword of the Sirdar.

The sword of the Sirdar! It has pricked the African earth and prepared the pestilent swamps of the Soudan for the planting of acres of English roses. Acres and acres of English roses, with cool clumps of shamrock intermingled, and a significant border of thistles!

Are there no drawbacks to the benefaction that has been bestowed upon us by the opening up of the Soudan?

Of course there are. There is fever—for one drawback—fever that tortures and then slaughters, both natives and Europeans, and at wholesale. But what of it? That's part of the "White Man's Burden." And we, with our increasing and ever-increasing family—our children, Irish and Scotch and English and Welsh—and our very small islands, must expect to put up with something, if we can be accommodated with more and still more room. What if we do meet with cholera and bubonic plague and African fever now and then? We will do our calm best with them, and hew out our own salvation through and in spite of them and of everything. There are worse things than cholera and plague and Soudanese fever. Do you doubt me? Go into the East End of our London and see—you who have travelled in Africa and in Asia, go into the East End and see. I have seen more reeking horror there, humanity more debased, more writhing and more torn, than I ever saw in the slums of Shanghai or in the leper settlements of the Punjaub.

The Soudan may be a sanitarium for some of us and ours—in spite of the Soudanese fever.

We are grateful to the sword of the Sirdar. We have great cause to be.

I abhor war. But I believe that often your soldier is your truest philanthropist—the most effectual if the most drastic reformer. Often he is the only possible reformer. And I am quite sure that, at his roughest and worst, he never does half the harm in Asia or Africa that is constantly done by your mild-faced, soft-voiced missionary.

We cannot realise how much we owe to the sword of the Sirdar. But time will show. Even now the face of

Africa is changing. And in a few years—in less than five years—yes, even as the nineteenth century dies, I dare be bound—there will be cricket fields where for uninterrupted centuries the lizards have sunned themselves on the mud-banks of the Nile. English lovers will walk hand in hand—

> "Where the spotted lilies quiver
> By the lazy lagging river."

And many an English troth shall be plighted and many an honest English kiss given where for untold decades, at sunrise and at sunset, the barren Soudanese women have crept to bathe in the child-giving Nile. And in the swamps and on the highlands, in the desert and in the perfumed pleasure-places, shaded and cooled by grape vines and by cucumbers—spots that were but yesterday the harem gardens of the Khalifa—the camel and the motor car shall lie down in peace together.

But the transfiguration of the Soudan suggests another picture. And it is one not altogether so bright. What does the metamorphosis of the Soudan mean to the Soudanese peoples—the peoples native there, and the peoples for centuries at home there? To me that question is more interesting, and in many ways more important, than is the question, "What shall we gain by the opening up of Nigritia?"

Of the nature of the Soudan itself we still understand but little, and of its people we understand much less.

Only a small portion of the Soudan is undesirable in topography or climate. There is a strip of arid sand in the north, but the rest of the "Country of the Blacks" is arable and pleasant. Most of the Soudan is elevated, full

of vast and undulating tracts of vegetation, of fruitful plateaus and highlands bursting with fruit and flower.

From April to October it is hot, and it rains as perhaps it rains nowhere else except in the Punjaub. The thunderstorms are among the superbest spectacles of nature. The downrush of water is tremendous. All the watercourses—the khors and wadies—are flushed and flushed again, and vast extents of land are as the whole earth was when just such a wet season drove Noah into his ark. For weeks and weeks intercommunication is cut off absolutely. But the trees and the cereals and the natives thrive and multiply under the warm beneficent drenching. And the Soudanese climate is not monotonous. In the cooler season snow falls on the highlands and water freezes into ice—not icy scum, but true, thick ice. And you 'll need fires six months a year if you go to live at Kano.

The Soudan's ague is not nice. I have spoken of its fevers, and there are ailments there that are even grimmer. A European predisposed, in the least, to cutaneous trouble should go anywhere else rather than to the Soudan.

There is almost a paucity of wild beasts in the Soudan, though such as are there, embrace a large variety, and are far more picturesque than lovable. The service animals, necessary or useful to our European conditions of life, do well when imported into the Soudan.

The natural larder of the Soudan is plenteously stocked. And the Soudan's flora and its vegetation are as lovely, as striking, and more diversified than the vegetation and the flora of Hawaii.

The magnificent boabab often boasts a girth of eighty feet, and the matchless deleb palm grows to a hundred

and thirty feet and more. The cotton trees shower the sweet grass with snows of eider-down, and beside the tamarinds grow the curious jerjak trees with their constant outpour of vegetable honey.

The Soudan is rich in maize and hemp and durrah. It has a wealth of indigo and of tobacco. It is lush with gourds and with melons—melons sweeter than the melons that grow at the foot of Vesuvius. And only the hypercritical can find fault with the mock-coffee made from the plenteous kolo nut. The abundance and variety of fish is very great, and the plenty and variety of water fowls is scarcely less. The influx of insect life is often a real calamity, and the beetles are over many, but the endless swarms of butterflies add a delicate and tremulous beauty to scenes whose beauty needed no enhancing.

Such, in brevity, is the Soudan: the true, the undoubted home of the Negro race.

The inhabitants of the Soudan are more difficult of description than the country itself, because of the ethnological intricacy of the subject, and because of our very elementary knowledge of it. To speak of the Soudanese peoples at once intelligibly and briefly is almost, perhaps quite, impossible.

Throughout the Soudan the Negroes form the basic and the aboriginal element of the population. The Negroes are the Soudanese, narrowly and properly speaking. There are no other aboriginals. In some districts live Negroes of pure, unmixed blood, but more frequently they have mixed with one or both of the two branches of the Caucasic stock, which were long centuries ago grafted on the Soudanese tree of life. The Negro is gregarious to a degree, and in many ways, but in no way

more than in his marryings and givings in marriage. Given an opportunity, he will cheerfully marry anybody or everybody, and he has a wonderful knack of making marriage a success—from his own standpoint at least. In the Soudan his matrimonial opportunities have been great and varied, and the result, in the present generation, is an ethnological maze that it may well puzzle the most patient, the most indefatigable, and the most enthusiastic student to thread.

The Soudan was in remote times invaded and then populated by Semitic and Hamitic branches of Caucasic stock. The restless Arab—ever astray and never at anchor—is as much at home, as well established, in a dozen parts of earth as he is, or ever was, in Arabia. And none but the very specially ignorant think or speak of the Arabs as the inhabitants of Arabia only. Ever since the spread of Islam in North Africa several distinct tribes of Arabs have been rooted and have been multiplying in the Soudan. They are the Semitic Soudanese. They have held so aloof, so to themselves, that the Negro-Arabic marriages have been insignificant, and need not even be considered in so necessarily superficial an account as this.

But the Hamitic people, who came to Negro-land in far, far off prehistoric times, have not been so racially exclusive. The Fulahs, the Berbers, and the Tibus (the three subdivisions of the Hamitic Soudanese) have kept their race-blood pure less often than they have mingled it with the blood of the Negroes and of the Negroid half-castes. Given four distinct peoples, who have formed and gone on forming, since remote prehistoric ages, every possible combination and recombination of bloods, and the diffi-

BROTHERS FROM THE ABYSSINIAN EDGE OF THE SOUDAN

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culty of deciding who and what most of the Soudanese are needs no further demonstrating.

There are in the Soudan many Berbers of unmixed blood, but not significantly many. And there are between eight and nine millions of Fulahs of pure blood. They are the most widespread of all the Soudanese peoples—perhaps the most powerful—and are generally thought to be the most intelligent. They are adaptive and adaptable. To them the sway of the sword of the Sirdar means little detriment and much benefit.

But what of the Negro and the Arab? I know the Negro well. I have studied him in his native lair—or at the edge of it—and I grew up among him and his in the American home of his enforced adoption. I love the Negro—I love him very much. He is largely the same in Africa and in America. He is plastic and happy-go-lucky, and as faithful as a good dog. If we are just a little wise in our treatment of him in the Soudan, he will thrive and brim over with happiness under the sway of the sword of the Sirdar, and all the Soudan will be musical, with music than which none is sweeter (so at least I think, I whose first lullaby it was): the Darkies singing darky melodies. The Negro thrives under sunshine and wise firmness. I hope and I fear for him in the Soudan. He is so very different from all the other peoples we have conquered or brought within our "influence," and it takes time (generations often) to know him. Englishmen and Scotchmen will not easily fall *en rapport* with the Negro. Irishmen will understand him sooner and better. If we try to over-educate, or to over-elevate him, we'll make climacteric fools of ourselves and woeful wreck of him. We can Christianise him easily enough. He will be an intense

ritualist — every black man of him. Unfortunately he takes to a new religion with disconcerting rapidity—and the religion must be showy and sounding. The Negro is ineradicably hysterical, theatrical, and fond of the flesh-pots. But he will die for you, and what's more, suffer privation for you, if he loves you. His brain is not very big, but his heart is. I pray that we may have the grace to treat him with great kindness—but not with too much —and with supreme and vigilant wisdom.

And the Soudanese Arabs? I am afraid! The Arabs remind me in many ways of the American Indians: one of the noblest races the sun ever shone on until we stole its birthright and degraded it to the bye-word and hissing among the nations that the Indians of the United States are to-day. Better far for the Indian, and far less shame to us, if we had exterminated him when we stole his home —far better that than to have unmanned him!

The Arab never changes—never mingles his race characteristics. How will he bear close contact with us and our civilisation? Is there room for him and for us in the Soudan? I am afraid! But certainly no European understands the Arabs better than Lord Kitchener does. And I pray devoutly that the sword of the Sirdar may not prove a fallen sword of Damocles upon the Soudanese children of Hagar.

CHAPTER XVI.

CUBAN CHILDREN.

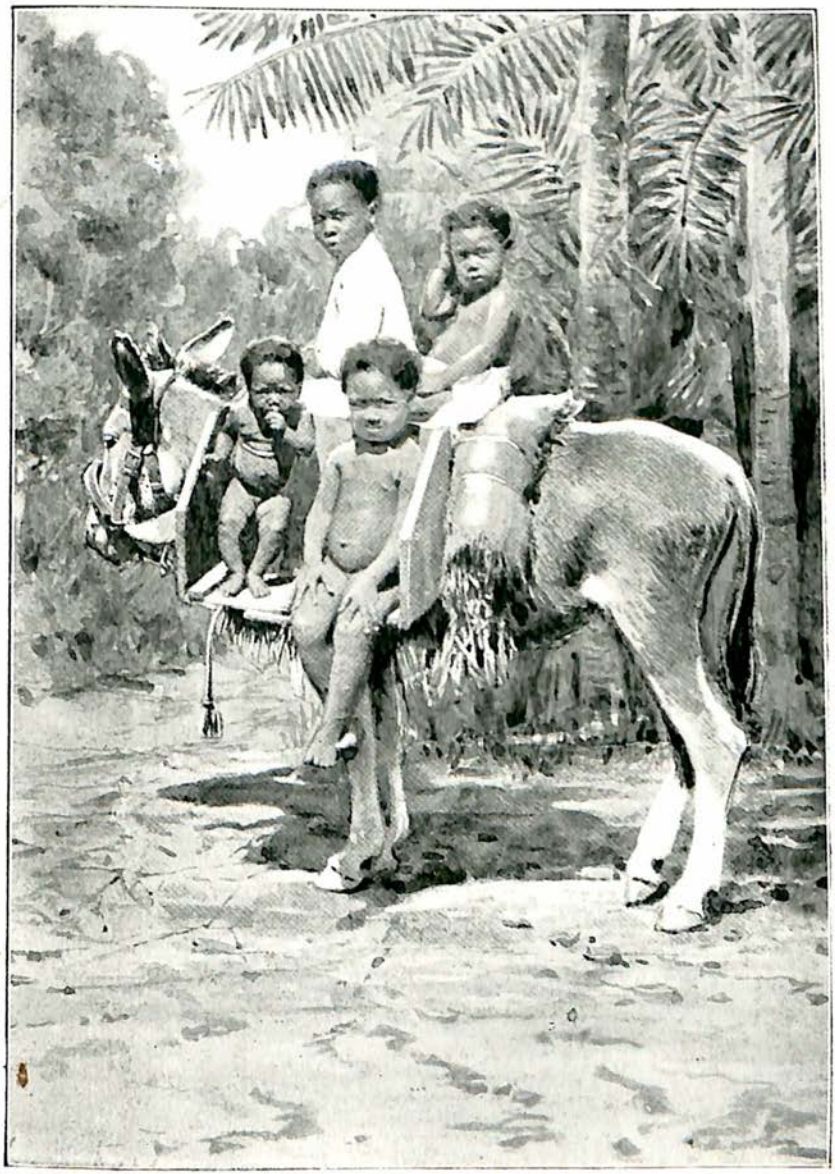
"Unmothered babes, he thought, had need
Of mother nature more than others use
And Pan's white goats, with udders warm and full
Of mystic contemplations, come to feed
Poor milkless lips of orphans."

I CAN recall no other country in which there is so sharp a contrast between the children of the rich and the children of the poor as there is in Cuba. The first lead a life of extreme luxury, indolence, and early dissipation. The second lead a life of as extreme industry, deprivation, and dearth of amusements. Loosely speaking, the two have but one thing in common—lack of education. Not one child in ten on the island receives a lettered education of any sort—not even of alphabetic quality and monosyllabic quantity. On the whole, I think the children of the poor are the better educated of the two. To be sure, the children of wealth are, in some sort of fashion, taught of books and from books, and the children of poverty are not; but the fashion is so pitifully superficial and so disgustingly fragmentary that it is well-nigh valueless. And the poor children learn many a practical lesson in the thorough school of life—they learn to do things. The richer children scarcely deign to learn to be. The children of the Cuban poor learn something of industry, of endurance, and of nature.

The division of the Cubans into rich and poor is convenient, and for many purposes essential, but is by no means distinctive. There are four classes of Cubans—Spaniards, Creoles, Free Mulattoes and Negroes, and the Servedors. The Servedors are *de facto* slaves, though since 1821 slave trading has been forbidden by law.

The children of the rich, especially among the Spaniards, almost always suffer from one of two evils. Either their training and their care are left entirely to their parents' slaves, or they are allowed almost from their cradles to share the fashionable follies and amusements of Cuba's highly artificial society. It is the commonest sight to see a baby of three rouged and powdered, dressed quite as is her rouged and powdered mamma—flowers in her hair, necklace on her throat, furling and unfurling her tiny fan in the most languishing and *blasé* manner. Boys whom we would scarcely think mature enough for "Etons" have their wardrobe from Paris, wear jewels and pointed-toed patent leathers, and flourish slim, ridiculous canes. Both the little boys and girls go to functions—"grown up" functions, if you please—and flirt and dance and talk small talk, and often, let me hasten to add, fall asleep over it and have to be carried home and put to bed; for it is difficult to destroy the little creatures' beautiful childlike qualities, even in Cuba. Ah! it is a sad picture, and it always makes me feel, as Polly Eccles felt after a liberal spoonful of red-currant jam, "shuddery." And the traveller was guilty of but slight exaggeration who said, "Literally there are no children in Cuba: men and women they descend from their nurses' arms."

Among the children who have constant and unsupervised contact with Negro slaves, a spirit of arrogance and



BELOW THE SALT

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selfishness is almost always engendered, and not infrequently a spirit of brutality. I believe that nothing is worse for a little child than to have the command of an injudiciously obedient servant. It was the one great fault with every Hindu servant I ever had. They would obey my toddling tyrants at any and every cost. It was funny enough at first to hear two mites who couldn't speak plainly cry "Boy-boy!" with quite the grand air; but I have always felt that that way Baby's ruin would lie. I often think of a little story I once heard of the Empress Frederick—the then Crown Princess of Germany—as proving very prettily her motherly wisdom. Word was brought her one day that her eldest son positively refused to have his face washed. The little prince was about to start for his afternoon drive. The royal mother smiled and sent an order to the palace sentries that they were to omit to salute his young Highness when he passed them. They obeyed her. The royal youngster complained to his mother, who explained that princes with dirty faces were not entitled to a salute; and from that day to this he has, I believe, never made a difficulty about the washing of his face. Now, no Cuban nurse would dare complain of the delinquencies of her young charges, and the average Cuban mother is far too lazy to care whether her child has its face washed or not. I speak, of course, of the Cuban women of fashion.

Every Cuban woman, young or old, has one great virtue: she has very little to say, she talks next to nothing. And this is also true of the miniature woman—the little girl who so sadly soon becomes a woman of fashion, a member of the Cuban *monde*.

All the schools in Cuba are Church schools; the fees are

high, but the boys are taught little enough, and the girls far less. Boys and girls are never educated together. The earliest and the most emphatic lesson taught the little girl is to distrust the little boy, and to regard him as an animal of prey, cunning and vicious. Man is her enemy, and etiquette her god. She is taught that early and late. And she must by no means walk to school alone, no matter how near the convent to her home. The nuns teach her to embroider, if she will learn. They teach her "demeanour," which she always does learn. She takes to it as a duckling takes to *aqua pura*. It is her native element. Perhaps she learns to write her name, to read a very little, to lisp a few words of French, and a very little inferior music. That is the utmost. Every boys' school is named after some male saint; every girls' school is named after some female saint. On the day sacred to its patron saint, the school invariably has a holiday.

Every girl in Cuba is named Maria. She usually has many other names, always at least one other, but Maria as a matter of course. Many a boy, too, bears the name of the Holy Virgin in addition to other names. That usually means that he has no sisters.

A Cuban baby is baptised when it is two weeks and a day old—at the very latest. Its godfather is a person most important, and his choice involves much serious consideration—not as to the nobility of his character, but the length of his purse; for etiquette compels him to spend much money. He must provide the christening party with carriages, unless the child's parents own them. It would be beyond words *infra dig.* if a Cuban baptismal party walked to church. It is quite usual for people who live next door to a church to drive to it if a baptism be the

sacred function of the moment, and it never occurs to anyone that so to drive is either a joke or an absurdity. The godfather must celebrate the birth or the christening by giving, entirely at his own expense, as lavish an entertainment as possible. He must also present pieces of money right and left to relatives, friends, and acquaintances; gold if possible, but at least silver. He must give the mother gold: a doubloon (worth about three pounds), if he would appear really genteel. In each piece of gold or silver a hole is pierced, and a silver or silken cord passed through it, that the recipient may hang the coin about his or her neck. Such mutilated pieces are current coin in Cuba, but are seldom taken from the island, being, of course, under weight.

The Cuban women do not go to the frequent and popular cock-fights and bull-fights, but the children do —boys and girls. Most of the children know many games of chance, and play them. They all play dominoes.

One beautiful creature of Cuba is known, and its possession eagerly sought, by the children of all classes: the phosphorescent fly. The children of affluence buy these wonderful fireflies, keep them as pets, wear them as ornaments, and play with them. The poor children catch them and sell them, or keep them as playthings, or as lamps. They are the most wonderful fireflies on earth. The poor put a dozen or two of them into a rude lantern —a calabash perforated with innumerable small holes— and such is often all the lantern, or night-light, they have. And I assure you that you can quite see to read and write by such a light, if the flies are of even average phosphorescence.

These *cucullos* are often larger than a medium-sized

roach. They have three eyes — wells of living, vivid phosphorus. The *cucullo* is the lamp of the Cuban lovers who creep out in the night-time to hold stolen tryst. Women and children who keep them for pets, encasket them in dainty wicker cages, or *cucuejeras*, feed them upon sugar, and bathe them in tepid water. Women and wee girls wear them in their hair, at their belts, under their delicate gauzy garments, and fastened to their bosom in knots of heliotrope and honeysuckle, of Cape roses and of jasmine, of sweet peas, and "Cupid's tears." The air of Cuba is full of moving jewels by day and night. The dusk and midnight are full of fireflies, and the dawn and the midday are full of gem-winged butterflies, and a galaxy of glitteringly feathered, but songless birds.

Joseph's coat was colourless and of a dull neutral tint contrasted with the houses of Cuba, which are as many coloured as the scales of Cuba's fish—fish matched in glory and variety of hue only by the fish of Hawaii and Ceylon. The children of the cities live in houses that are painted purple and pink, scarlet and blue, yellow and crimson, and emerald. There is no glass in these houses' windows, but picturesque, if forbidding, bars of iron. The children of the rural poor live, if they dwell in houses at all, in deplorable huts, floored with mud, and roofed with palm leaves. In the houses of the well-to-do a cool, flower-adorned verandah ensquares a marble-floored fountain-centred courtyard, where bare, black, slave children, thorough-bred horses, and potted orange trees crowd. The children of the poor play outside the hovel door. They rollick in the dust, among the pigs and the cacti, and throw stones at the hens and goats who slouch unrebuked in and out of the wretched hut.

The children of the impecunious are taught to pick and to sort the coffee beans; to catch fish and to sell them; to ensnare birds; to fill big market panniers with fresh grass, just-gathered oranges, or striped melons, newly-cut corn-stalks and plump plaintains; to pour milk into slim-necked jugs, and secure their mouths with corn ears or unripe bananas; to gather oysters and snare cray-fish; to drive donkeys and sell lottery tickets. They live largely on soup, and rice, and fruit. The Negro children dance furiously and fantastically; the Spanish children dance gracefully and languidly. Every Negro boy can make a drum and beat it for hours, whooping and dancing to it outrageously, but always in perfect rhythm and time.

Every *pueblo* or village has a sacred *dia de fiesta* in honour of its patron saint. Then there is a "procession of Maria" and a *loa*. *Las loas* are religious prologues; they are the Passion Plays of Cuba. A little girl is carried about as the image of the Virgin or the patron saint. Sometimes she is splendidly dressed, sometimes she wears nothing. Before her much-decked cart go men clad as Indians, behind her come men clad as Moors. There are music and much festive paraphernalia and a march all about the *pueblo;* when at last a halt is made, the little one stands up and recites the *loa* which has been written for the day.

Every Cuban child is taught to avoid the moonlight. The most indolent Cuban mother will bestir herself to cry, "Come in out of the moonshine! Salvador, Manuel, Jose, Dolores, Mercedes, come in! Come in, I say! Do you not know the moon kills or twists the beasts of the field, who never lie down to sleep but in the shade, that it turns good fish into poison, and makes men and children

crooked-faced and feeble-brained? Come in at once, I say!"

"Sweets to the sweet!" The *dulce* sellers are an important, busy, and prosperous portion of the Cuban community. Chinamen carrying long boxes of red lacquer, beat them briskly with a noisy stick, and gaily-clad mulatto women cry out the sweet wares that they carry on bright trays. Both sell preserved fruits, grated cocoanut, "milk-creams," and Guava jelly; and the blithe, black-eyed human flies—Spanish, Creole, and Negro—swarm about them and buy their delicious dulces.

The convent bells of Cuba at sunset ring out the hour of *oracion*. There are several gracious, graceful customs attendant upon that hour—customs that were universally observed in Cuba, and still are among the old *noblesse*. As the bells are heard, every voice is hushed, every form of labour, activity, or occupation is dropped, and old and young, rich and poor, fall upon their knees in silent prayer. Upon the large estates the slaves flock into the house, and one by one, on bended knee, beg an evening blessing, of master or of mistress. The children check their laughter or their play and kneel before father or mother and ask a benediction. If there are grandparents in the home, the tender little ceremony is repeated at their feet. Often the old hand quivers a bit—and the old voice too—as one is laid upon the baby head, and the other whispers solemnly and lovingly, "*Dios te paga bueno hijo*"—"God make you good, my child."

I wrote the above pages just before the Spanish-American war. Now the "star-spangled banner" waves in triumph over Cuba. I wonder what Cuban children will be like, and how they will be conditioned, on July 4th, 1998!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHILDREN OF SICILY.

"Our daily miracle was he: a bud
Steeped in the scents of Eden, balmy fair,
The world's pure morning bright upon his hair,
And life's unopened roses in his blood!
In the blank eyes of birth a timorous star
Of wonder sparkled, as the soul awoke,
And from his tongue a brook-like babbling broke,—
A strange, melodious language from afar!

"His body showed, in every dimpled swell,
The pink and pearl of Ocean's loveliest shell,
And swift the little pulses throbbed along
Their turquoise paths, the soft breast rose and fell
As to the music of a dancing song,
And all the darling graces which belong
To babyhood, and breathe from every limb,
Made life more beautiful, revealed in him."

IN the seething blur of modern European life it is more than restful, it is something to anchor to, to look upon a people who are, though in no way enervated, calmly, distinctly, and solitarily classical.

The Sicilians of to-day are classical, as were the Greeks to whom Pericles wrangled, for whom Epaminondas fought.

Sicily belongs to the kingdom of Italy. The Sicilians belong to the great, the passed-away, but never-to-be-extinct, the immortal states of Greece and Carthage.

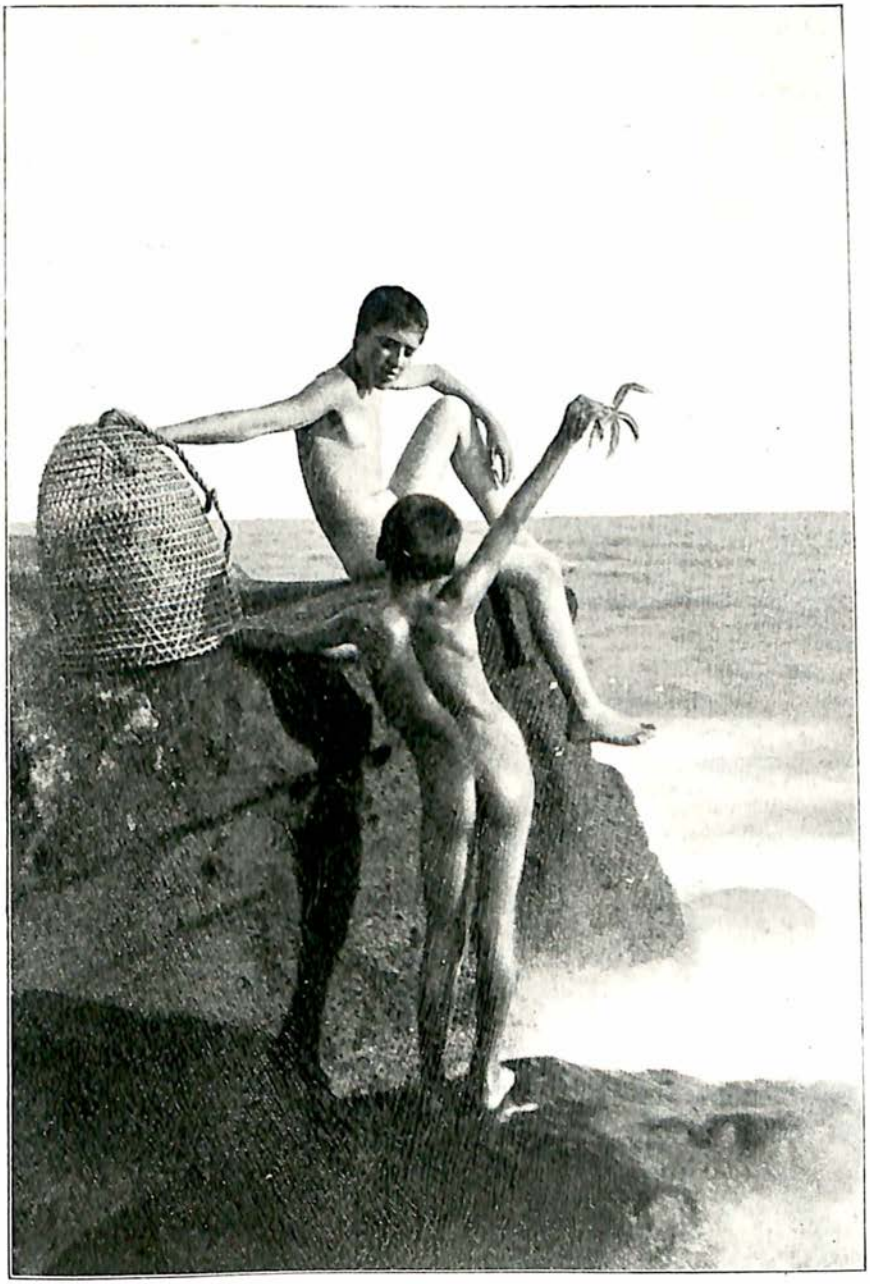
The children of Sicily play even now with "the great

god Pan down there mid the reeds by the river." They play, and think, and pull their sustenance from the vines of grapes and trees of olives, as the children of garden-girdled Athens and of hill-hemmed Civita Vecchia played, thought, and fed.

They are uniquely interesting—the children of Sicily—because they are the children of the one living classical European race; a race which is as modern as it is classical, as actively and vitally classical as it is modern. The boys who to-day lave their naked limbs in the citron-fringed streams of Sicily, and cast their deft grapple for the pink and crimson coral sprays, are in the flesh and in the spirit as typically classical as were the sandal-shod boys who walked and philosophised among the academic Athenian groves where Socrates and Aristotle taught, and Alcibiades learned and "larked."

In all humanity's long chain there is no missing link. The Eskimo in his ice-house, the digger Indian in his indescribable home of mud, the American millionaire in his palace of brownstone, the Persian prince in his palace of costly soft-hued marbles, are not of one flesh or of one bone, but they are of one kind, each two by the others linked. The children of Sicily are the living, breathing link between Europe's past and Europe's present.

So unique, so interesting is their position—the position of the children of modern Sicily—that I would, I think, better skim what they do than what they are. Before I try to tell how they live and play to-day (an easy and a pleasant task), let us glance, earnestly, though briefly, at that from which they have sprung, at their ancestry—at Sicily's history.



SICILIAN FISHER BOYS

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Sicily hangs from Italy—her pendant and chief gem—as Ceylon hangs from India. All that is soft of climate, bright of flower, sweet of perfume in India, culminates in Ceylon. All that is seductive of climate, lovely of blossom, scented of breath in Italy, culminates in Sicily. Sicily was the birthplace of much, very much, of Europe's art and of Europe's literature; Ceylon was the cradle of very much of Asia's art and of Asia's literature. Both islands are near, very near, to their mainlands. Ceylon is India's keystone; Sicily is a part of Italy in no whit integral—a bit of Italy quite from Italy apart. Ceylon is the Austral-Asian-European globe-trotter's stamping-ground; Sicily is an island of unbeaten paths, she is visited by travellers few and far between. She has slipped out of our *fin-de-siècle* reckoning, and we are far too busy with our up-to-date Armenians, our globe-trotting royalties, and our dismembering governments, to remember what Sicily was before the Berber and the Moor grew harmless. Long before the word of Cæsar stood against the world Sicily stood "in the forefront of the long line of battle between Christendom and Islam, between Aryan civilisation and progress and Semitic ferocity and servile confusion of idea."

Of the known civilised nations, none other, except China, has for so many years and so distinctly preserved her individuality as Sicily has. There has been no—or almost no—mighty people dwelling upon the shores of the Mediterranean that has not battled, and battled bravely, for the possession of Sicily. Many of those nations have taken and held Sicily. Yet through all, and above all, she has held her own, upheld her individuality, and preserved her nationality. Sicily was a

Spanish colony, a Greek colony, a Carthaginian colony, a Roman colony. For two hundred years and more she was an African colony. Yet, through all her strangely shifting history, Sicily has been and remained Sicily.

The Sicilians of to-day differ in customs and in manners, in thought and in feelings, from the other subjects of King Humberto as the Sicilians of old differed from the Greeks and Romans, by whom they were conquered, but to whom they taught the arts of oratory, of idyllic poetry, of pastoral and dramatic comedy.

The climate of Sicily is more African than European. The heat is hot, very hot, blinding, fierce, silent. Yet there is no other European peasantry, no other European people even (I may, I think, say), whose children walk so well as do the children of Sicily. It has been said, and in no way injudiciously said, that the present condition of the Sicilian peasantry bears witness, in many ways, to the hurtfulness of the old Spanish rule. On the other hand, it ought, I think, to be conceded (but I have never seen it so conceded) that the uniquely beautiful carriage of the Sicilians and their superb endurance as pedestrians are indisputably the long-accrued result of that old feudal Spanish rule. The Spanish nobles, who were for many years in the ascendant in Sicily, each and all acquired estates and serfs. Each noble caused those serfs, for purposes of government and reciprocal protection, to dwell within the shadows of his castle walls. In times of peace most of these serfs were engaged in agriculture. In times of war many of those serfs were still engaged in agriculture; for Sicily has always been a self-fed island. The farm-cultivations, the most useful but least ornamental

portions of the noble's estate, lay, naturally, farthest from his dwelling's walls. Therefore the serfs who ploughed, and planted, and reaped had to tramp many miles to their daily toil. For many years most of the Sicilians had to take a bi-daily walk of ten or twelve miles. It is, I believe, because of this, and because the custom has never quite changed, that the children of Sicily are to-day the best walkers in Europe. I say that the custom of large congregation of the people is unchanged. It is unchanged even now. Only a small proportion of the Sicilians live in communities of less than five thousand. It follows, of course, that the peasants have now, as of yore, to trudge far to their daily toil, and so, in nature's great beneficence, it follows that the children of the Sicilian soil walk well.

There is something else that every Sicilian child can do effectively, if not well. He can speak fluently, with plausibility, and apparent eloquence. That, too, is a heritage from classic days.

The half-clad, or the unclad, Sicilian boy of to-day is not only the glibbest, but the most movingly glib boy in Europe. He out-orates, he out-Herods (and, at less than a pinch, he often out-reasons) the Westminster statesman or parliamentarian, who would be immensely surprised to know that there is no deftness of modern English argument that was not germinated in Sicily.

Do you doubt that the ten-year-old goat-herd, who couches himself upon the sweet Sicilian grasses, and suns himself in lizard-like contentment, while his silky-coated charges browse upon the perfumed herbs, is the head of the great house of which the leader of our British Government and the leader of our British Opposition are merely

insular and weak, though much-heard and much-heeded, younger sons? Let me try to prove it.

After the rise and fall of many dynasties—native, semi-native, and foreign—Sicily threw off the yoke of personal headship and became a republic—a democracy. Having assumed the reins of government, the Sicilian citizen was forced to think. The bit was in the nation's mouth, and the nation pulled and tested the strength of each individual driver's wrist. The citizen was forced to think. Being a Southerner, speech followed thought. He had to express what he thought. Being a Southerner, he was as impressionable as he was demonstrative. It followed that the Sicilian who spoke the most effectively, most caught his nation's ear, most ruled his nation. After the downfall of the House of Gelo a strong enthusiasm for freedom seized the inhabitants of Sicily. A strong, an overpoweringly strong, enthusiasm for freedom always means a national and individual right to all to talk at once. When an entire nation is talking at once it follows that he who can most make himself heard rules. With the establishment of popular government in Sicily germinated Sicilian rhetoric and Sicilian oratory. The market-place, the place of public speech and of public and common tribunal, became the head and the arterial centre of national life. Every question of national policy, every question of petty personal dispute, was debated and decided in the "Agora," the place of free and universal speech. After the talk came the votes. This was among a people (the Sicilian Greeks) keen of intellect, quick of sympathy, but indolent of prolonged and laborious mental effort. It is almost impertinent to say that it followed that he who spoke best ruled all. Oratory was omnipotent; never has oratory

been so wide, so deep of sway, as it was in the prime of Sicily's self-rule—Sicily's democratic rule.

Every immense act, or fact, or change in the world's history has been the outcome of some great human impulse, of some great human experience, and of some great intellectual aggregation. Out of Sicily's big, national impulse, out of Sicily's big, universal wrangle, sprang Sicily's oratory. The conditions amid which that oratory came into existence were favourable. It throve. Great teachers of oratory arose. They "grew," as the Topsy of Harriet Beecher Stowe's imagination grew. About these masters, and these master teachers of oratory flocked the Sicilian youth. So great grew those teachers' fame that they were lured by offers of great price to Greece. The Sicilian, Georgias of Leontini, and others took to Greece the branch of pseudo-philosophical oratory which came to be called sophistry. The Greeks added to it, took from it, changed it, and passed it on to the thinkers and the speakers of Italy. The direct descent of all modern European eloquence and oratory from the oratory and rhetoric of Rome is a matter of history and of easy demonstration. Georgias of Leontini—the Sicilian eloquent—was the founder of that glorious glib and almost omnipotent race, of which Gladstone was the youngest son.

The children of Sicily are happy—as happy as the blithe, semi-tropical days are long. They suck the honey from every wayside flower of life. They find great joy in the common everyday things of existence. They are sympathetic with nature and with each other. They garland the vulgar things of everyday life with beauty, and are content with common things, since and because beauty is their common lot.

The children of Sicily are sweet, but volcanic of temper. They are pliable, generous, easy-going, as a rule, but as the lava floods of Etna pour down her snow-ermined sides on to her flower-bright base, so do the naughty passions of those dark-eyed little children break through their usual sunshineyness of nature; frowns chase the smiles away, hot ugly words pour from the red little mouths, and the brown little hands hurl nasty little stones at the other little boys and girls.

There are two great divisions of the children of every race; divisions greatly differentiated, strongly marked by the dividing line between affluence and poverty. However close their racial kinship, however one their ancestry, the children of the rich and the children of the poor are in many essentials and in many strikingly noticeable ways as far asunder as is pole from pole. You can more easily mistake a boy of Norway for a boy of Spain than you can a boy of any nation's poverty for a boy of that same nation's wealth.

Day after day, as I sit at my pleasant task, I find myself writing first of the children of the poor, and afterwards, if I have space, of the children of the rich. I have been thinking it over, and I don't intend to reform. There are two reasons (good ones, I think) why my pen should give *place aux pauvres.* Wealth is cosmopolitan; poverty is national. The child of wealth is a citizen of the world. Luxury, travel, and the things of international commerce and international information that money brings him dull the sharp edge of his nationalism, blur his individuality, both personal and national; the national always, the personal often. The child of poverty is the child of his nation's purest type. He is insular. Privation, daily

toil, necessitated intimacy with his native soil, and the things that grow upon that soil are the grindstones that keep sharp and ever sharper the razor-edge of his nationalism. The poverty that forces the poor boy to eat food and wear clothing of the cheapest, preserves and intensifies his individuality both personal and national; and again the national very much more than the personal.

The poor boy eats the fruits and the grains of his native land, and from them he imbibes the very spirit of that land—the essence and the acme of the veriest nationalism. He is confined to the products of his own country for food and raiment both of body and mind. He has no means to travel. He has no time to garner the rich harvests reaped by those who do travel. He must till his native soil, and feed his mind and heart upon the thoughts of those who till with him. It follows inevitably that he is characteristically national at his untutored core, and to his rough, toil-hardened finger-tips.

That the children of the poor are the more typical of national life is my best reason for glancing at them first. But my second reason is, I must own, the one that most sways my self-indulgent pen. The children of poverty are always picturesque. The children of wealth are almost always, in the Occident at least, commonplace—commonplace in dress and environment, if not in person, or feature, or appearance. "Commonplace" is the word I use, mark you! please, not "common"—common of frame, not common of self. Nothing can rob a little child of its sweetness—neither filth, nor extravagance of dress, nor yet even stupid cosmopolitanism of bringing up and of surrounding. But the little ones of wealth lose much of their artistic value on the picture of human life, be-

cause they are overdressed and dressed alike, fed alike, and bred alike. I have loved a canvas gem when I have seen it frameless on the easel in its pauper artist's carpetless studio in Paris; and the same picture has seemed almost vulgar and ill-drawn when I have seen it later hanging upon the walls of some New York *parvenu*, shamed by a shameless frame, elaborate, incongruous, and gaudy. And when my precious little parcels of children's pictures come to me—as they still are coming—from all parts of the world, I often catch myself half overlooking the rare beauty of some angel-like childish face, because the little body beneath is clad in robes rich, ugly, and cosmopolitan.

Yes, alas! poverty always, and wealth almost never, is picturesque. Stop! I take back that "alas." We—we who have food and warmth and raiment in sufficiency have so much; they, the really poor, have so little, Heaven forbid that I should grudge the beggar the picture of his rags!

Every Sicilian child is prouder than any Castilian. Every Sicilian boy can ride; and every Sicilian boy, even the poorest, has one great paramount ambition—he craves to own a horse, or a mule, or a donkey, and a cart.

There are two degrees of Sicilian poverty: the poverty that owns a more-than-gaily painted cart and a gorgeously and glitteringly caparisoned nag of some sort, not much matter what. The poverty that owns this, even though it owns nothing else, is poverty of the first and endurable degree. The poverty that owns no cart, no jot or tittle of a cart, that is poverty of the last degree—poverty "past hope, past help, past cure."

SICILIANS IN THEIR CART

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A Sicilian cart is a box perched bravely upon four very high wheels. To buy such a cart, or better still, to have it made to order, painted in consonance with the family taste, to buy an accompanying cob, clothe him with proper splendour, to take the kindest care of both cob and cart, a Sicilian family will skim and strain and work overtime for a twelvemonth, and live on beans and fearful bread for ever after.

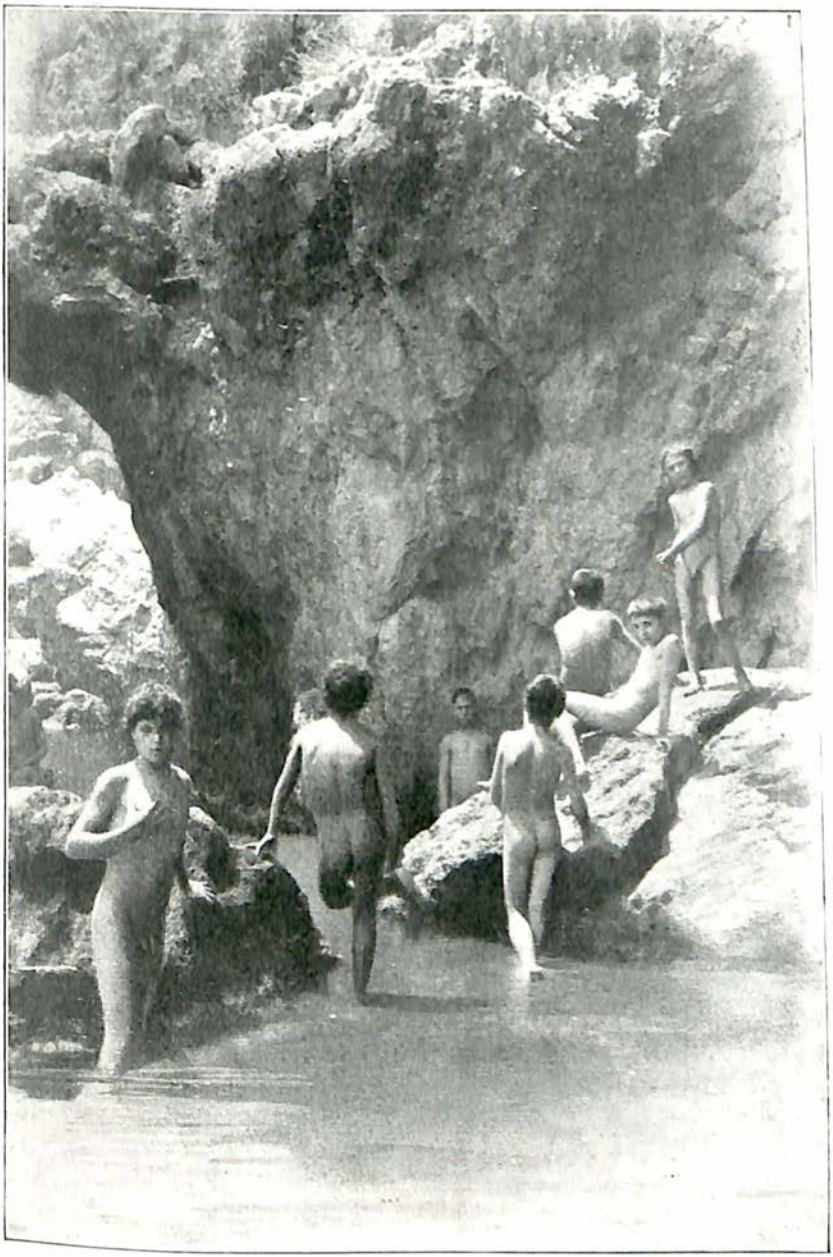
What his coffin is to a Chinaman his cart is to a Sicilian. It is his great ambition, his chief pride, his patent of gentility, his certificate of "good form." The typical Sicilian cart is a delirium of colour. Wheels, poles, dashboard, back, sides, front, inside, outside, are painted, not with meaningless parallelograms or soulless arabesques; no, indeed, but with pictures whose subjects are world-famous, and whose execution ought to be. Many things prove the many strains commingling in the Sicilian's blood, the many races that have conquered, mingled with, or at least vitally and for all time influenced the Sicilian race. His cart, the Sicilian's cart, proclaims and records it—the many minglings and interminglings that have made up the whole of Sicily's blood and Sicily's history.

I have not a timid pen, yet I will not attempt to describe the pictorial decorations of a Sicilian peasant's cart. I know that I could not do it, and I decline to try. But though I may not attempt a pen picture of the cart's *tout ensemble*, I may without indiscretion enumerate some of the pictures frescoed, and oh, such frescoing! on the different parts of one in no way extraordinary Sicilian cart. On one side did

> "Scavolia's good right hand
> Hiss and burn in the Tuscan fire."

On the other side Venus rose from the sea. Napoleon crossed the Alps on the splashboard. Berengaria bent her faithful lips to the envenomed arm of Richard Cœur-de-Lion on the back-board; and fauns, and toreadors, saints and Magdalenes, and naiads, and apostles, hustled each other for the wheels. And among all this carnival of hue, this chaos of subject, was painted—badly, but with all reverence—the birth at Bethlehem.

The steed that draws such a vehicle is always well groomed, well cared for, and, as far as possible, well fed. And the harness—oh, the harness! The horse, usually comely, always well cared for, is literally hidden beneath the harness, the head-gear, and their accompanying trappings. The wonderful saddles and horse-gear, inlaid with pearls and with carvings of gold and engravings of silver, which the ancient artisan-artists of Korea and Persia taught each other to make, were art wonders and triumphs of the old Orient. Far more gorgeous, if somewhat less artistic, are the harnesses, the saddle-cloths, the saddles, and the other horse-trappings of modern Sicily. They are indisputably African in origin, and Asiatic in remote ancestry. Red velvet is the favourite foundation of every *au fait* Sicilian harness or saddle. Silver filigree and brass bells hang from its edges and half cover its crimson surface. It has pyramids, and pagodas, and turrets, and rises from the nag's back, or head, for all the world like a velvet imitation of some red-lacquered Burmese shrine or temple. To own such a saddle is the big ambition of every peasant boy in Sicily, and the naked sepia-coloured boy who turns classically-graceful somersaults for your delectation as you drive along the citron-shaded, lava-paved roads, begs vociferously, and the



BATHING

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coppers you toss him he will hoard, perchance to buy himself needless and unclassical garments, but more probably to swell the nest-egg which sooner or later he hopes to barter for a cart and cob and their resplendent etceteras.

The little Sicilians are very natural and inoffensive in their almost universal nudity. They are to a dot like the masterpieces of the master sculptors of old Greece, warmed into adorable flesh. To be shocked at their pretty brown nakedness is as ridiculous as to be shocked at the Venus de Milo's bare neck, or the shoeless feet of the sure-footed goats that browse upon the Sicilian slopes as they browsed when Ulysses heard the syrens sing.

Almost every Sicilian child can swim, fish, make nets, and sail a boat. Most of the boys know something of boat-building and of mining. They all can sing. They have a nice certainty of ear that is a national and a great gift from the gods. They have voices that centuries of grape-eating have made as sweet, as deep, as rich, and as mellow as Spanish wine.

All these children know something of olive culture, orange, vine, fig, lemon, citron culture, etc.; they understand the conduct of tiny silkworm farms; they can make olive oil, and dry raisins too.

Every peasant girl on the island can dry figs (for the winter's store), harness a horse, bake black bread, mind goats and kine and fowls, and wash, and iron, and sew a bit. They do not know the names of half the flowers that grow in almost unprecedented plenty in Sicily, pushing their lovely way even through the lava streams of Etna's stony, barren side. But they know those flowers' haunts, and the sweet habits of their bright,

delicate lives, and they love—those Sicilian children—to steep their festal garments in the perfumed breath of pompadour clove, of mignonette, and of nespole flowers. They love to play and have great gales of mirth, and romp among the pepper trees, the glossy magnolias, and the green *aigrettes* of the delicate bamboos. They love to dream (they do not, I fancy, think much) and to sit and sun themselves in the warm, pungent fields of carnations, tuberoses, and jessamine flowers. But they love, too, to work. There is none of that innate laziness which characterises the typical southern Italian about the true child of Sicily. They are industrious in a calm, dignified, Hellenic way. And when they play, they play with a beautifully directed *abandon* that reminds us of the youths that trained for the old Olympian games; and when their sweet, silver, childish laughter cleaves the heavy, perfumed air, all the world seems musical and glad. There is no other such laughter, so young, so beautiful. It takes us back to the golden days when the earth was young and no child sad. Such laughter might almost turn Time back in his relentless flight "and wake echo from his cave."

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CHAPTER XVIII.

KAFFIR CHILDREN.

"Eyes where midnight shames the sun,
Hair of night and sunshine spun,
Woven of dawn's or twilight's loom,
Radiant darkness, lustrous gloom,
God-like childhood's flower-like bloom."

IT says a great deal for childhood *per se* and for natural humanity, it speaks eloquently of the beneficial influence of nature, that the Kaffir children are by no means without charm, by no means lack beauty; for they are the children of a people who have no literature, who have no religion. But, without religion to inspire it, without literature to perpetuate it, the Kaffirs have art. Their art is the art of music. Every Kaffir kraal has at least one *myanga* or doctor of music. He composes the songs of the tribe, composes both the words and the music, and teaches them to the people, instructing with special care the children. Nor is music, though the most tangible expression of refinement to which the small Kaffirs are accustomed from their babyhood, the only refinement they enjoy. The Kaffirs have an elaborate etiquette and a carefully-thought-out social system. And their children have the advantage of unfettered limbs and well-fed lungs, of living out-of-doors, and cheek to cheek with nature.

The Zulus are one, and the most important, of the tribes into which the Kaffirs are divided.

The Kaffir children are splendid specimens of what we are wont to call "savagedom." They all show strong traces of a presumably Asiatic origin. Their hair is black and strong, but, unlike that of the Negro races, is neither knotted nor woolly. Often their faces are very Roman is moulding and in outline, and many a Kaffir boy, seen in profile, looks for all the world like some statue of "The Boy Apollo," stolen from the galleries of the Vatican, and painted brown. They have strong, white teeth, and eyes that are never still except when they sleep, eyes that seem to see everything, and suspect more. They are wonderfully observant. They are broad of chest and of shoulder, and carry their heads well.

A Kaffir hut is a "mere beehive of poles and of sticks thatched with grass." Such a hut is built in a day. Often it is built entirely of grass and of wattle. A hole in the side, about three feet by two, serves as a door, window, and chimney. Among the more primitive of the tribes, this aperture is often scarcely sixteen inches wide, and but little higher. The hut itself is usually between ten and thirty feet in diameter. In the cold and rainy seasons a fire is built on the centre of the dry earth floor, and at night the family sleep about this fire. That means forty people perhaps, but among the well-to-do Kaffirs each wife has her own hut.

The most popular boys' game in Zululand is the building of "play huts." A mere toddler will draw a perfect circle on the ground, and heap upon it the earth foundation of his toy-house. Every Kaffir has a peculiar facility in describing the circle, and no Kaffir can draw, or be

A KAFFIR FAMILY

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taught to draw, a square. The base line of a Kaffir hut is always as true a circle as if it had been drawn with a compass.

When a Kaffir baby is very young (two or three weeks old, perhaps), it is put into a bag-like sling of skin, and tied to its mother's back, and so goes wherever she, in her busy day's life, goes. It has a very snug, soft nest on the whole, if a very tense one, for the fur side of the skin is put next to Baby, whose legs are fastened about its mother's waist, or rather above it, whose arms are secured about her neck. Baby's head is well plastered with grease, and is never covered with anything else. But no Kaffir baby ever dies of sunstroke. Strangely enough consumption, quick consumption, is the great decimator of the juvenile ranks of Kaffirland, and in all Zululand there is scarcely a native mother of several children who has not lost at least one little one through consumption. The impunity with which the Kaffir children play about bare-headed, and heedless of the hottest sun, is not quite shared by their elders, who are very apt to carry over themselves a parasol of ostrich feathers or a tree branch. There are few sights more superbly ridiculous (to European eyes at least) than a great, naked Kaffir mincing proudly along beneath a very wobbly umbrella of ostrich feathers—feathers as undressed as himself. When a Kaffir baby is a few months old, it rides on its mother's hip, and as soon as it can stand at all it is put down and left to toddle about the kraal, or creep among the canes that thickly border the rivers, or the wild flowers and blossom-heavy vines of the nearest jungle.

When a Kaffir baby is born, every one in the kraal partakes of a bitter drug, which is held a sure preventive

of the severe illness and the evil influences which infest the tribe for several days after a birth. A Kaffir baby is at once given as much sour milk as it will swallow. When it is three days old it is given the nourishment nature has provided. When it is weaned it is given sweet cows' milk. In Kaffirland, only the children drink sweet milk. The grown-ups monopolise the sour milk, which is considered a rare delicacy, and after the first three days of their lives the children never taste it. At a very tender age the little Kaffir takes his place at the general meal. One Kaffir meal is very like another. Except in very inclement weather they eat their mealie-porridge and drink their horns of water out-of-doors. The Zulus are the most hospitable of all the Kaffirs, and no race is more hospitable than the Kaffir race. Often twenty or thirty self-invited guests will gather about the huge, steaming pot. It is an even chance that they are all strangers to the host. But they are all welcome, and feed themselves to repletion, as a matter of course. The only return the visitors make, dream of making, or are expected to make, for such lavish and unstinted hospitality is a running and incessant fire of elaborate compliments. The Kaffirs are inordinately vain, and as they squat about the mealie-pot—men, women, and children—and wait their turn for the spoon, all whose mouths are not full of mealies are expected to sing the praises of the host. This makes a Kaffir meal a very vocal function indeed, for there is only one spoon, no matter how large the number of the partakers of the porridge, and it passes in slow rotation from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth, round and round the circle until the leviathan pot is empty. The Kaffirs are great sticklers for etiquette, and with them, each meal is a

function nicely observed, even by the children. In the first place the *ompoopi*, or porridge, must be served and eaten piping hot. It must be cooked and served in a three-legged pot. The spoon must be gigantic, and made of wood, and it must never by any chance stand up (as it will unless care is exercised, the *ompoopi* is so thick) in the food, or the porridge will be indigestible. Watch a dozen groups of children playing at "dinner" in the sand. A big splinter, a branch of mimosa, or a shoot of sugar-cane will represent the spoon, but not once will you see it placed upright in the sand that is masquerading as porridge. All Kaffir children are greedy to gluttonness. They are devoted to sugar and all things saccharine. A moral little Zulu, who will steal nothing else, will steal sugar and sweet potatoes.

The Zulus are the champion snuff-takers of the world. Every Kaffir meal is followed by a taking of snuff, which occupies more time than the meal itself. And babies who are so young that they can scarcely stand alone, and so fat that they look like black and brown feather pillows, after they have gorged themselves with mealies, gather about the family snuff-box, and use its tickling contents until they nearly sneeze their round, gleaming heads off. They are taught to use the snuff with great cleanliness and no small ceremony.

The Kaffirs are noticeable among savage and semi-savage peoples because of the status of their women, especially of their women children. The wealth—and to a great extent the prestige—of an unmarried Zulu is determined by the number of his head of cattle. A married Kaffir is accounted rich or poor as he has many or few daughters The young man's great ambition is to own many cattle

for with many cattle he can buy many wives. The Kaffir *pater familias* longs for daughters because, when they have reached a marriageable age, he can sell them for cattle. Cattle and women are the most important—the tangible—expressions of Zulu wealth. Women and cattle are the most current and undepreciable coins of Kaffirland. So the birth of a girl is always a welcome event, and among these strange, half-savage, unlettered, and god-lacking people of South Africa girls are treated more on a par with their brothers than are the girls of those two peoples of antique and high civilisation and of many gods: the peoples of China and Hindustan. The marriage customs of the Kaffirs are eccentric and interesting, but very early nuptials are of too rare occurrence to justify me in dwelling on those customs here. But I may not inappropriately mention that few Kaffir girls are wedded against their own will; that every Kaffir girl is carefully drilled in the duties of a bridesmaid; and that, should a Kaffir wife prove childless, her husband may, at the end of the year, return her to her father or demand back the cattle he gave for her. This latter he usually does, but it is very seldom that the childless wife is returned.

When a Kaffir passes from childhood to maturity he or she spends several weeks in strict seclusion, the termination of which is marked by many curious observances. In the case of a girl, her entrance into womanhood is celebrated by a wild festival of dance called the *utonjane*.

The Kaffirs are no disciplinarians with their children. The child obeys if it likes; if it does not, the lax parents shake their heads and laugh. But there are some few things which every Kaffir child must learn an' he like

or no. They all learn the laws by heart, and most exactly. Since they have no literature, no letters, the Kaffirs can only record their laws in their own memories, and this one branch, this important branch of the few branches of a little Kaffir's education, is never neglected. Little Kaffirs are apt to fight. The girls have frequent fights among themselves, and fight to the bitter and sanguinary end. But Zulu children, like their elders, are never revengeful. They fight viciously and with bestial cruelty, but, the fight finished, it is forgotten, or, if remembered, remembered pleasantly.

Kaffir children must make their own toys. The boys make cows of wood or mud. They make cattle-pens and bows and arrows. They make spears of reeds. The girls make huts and kraals and oxen out of clay. Both boys and girls make jumping-ropes, and use them incessantly. An elaborately-dressed Kaffir baby has a necklace and anklets of beads. Every baby while teething wears, as a charm, a piece of snake skin or a brass button fastened to its neck or waist by a string.

A Kaffir mother is usually named after her eldest child with the prefix "Ma," which of course means mother. The natives always called Mrs. Livingstone, whose eldest child was named Robert, "Ma-Robert."

When a Kaffir woman leaves her young child for any but the shortest space of time, she invariably performs some charm to secure its safety until her return. According to the tribe of which she is, she smirches its head with clay, sprinkles it with milk, or moistens its hands with her saliva.

These children are very inquisitive, they are often witty, and always imaginative. They say that the stars

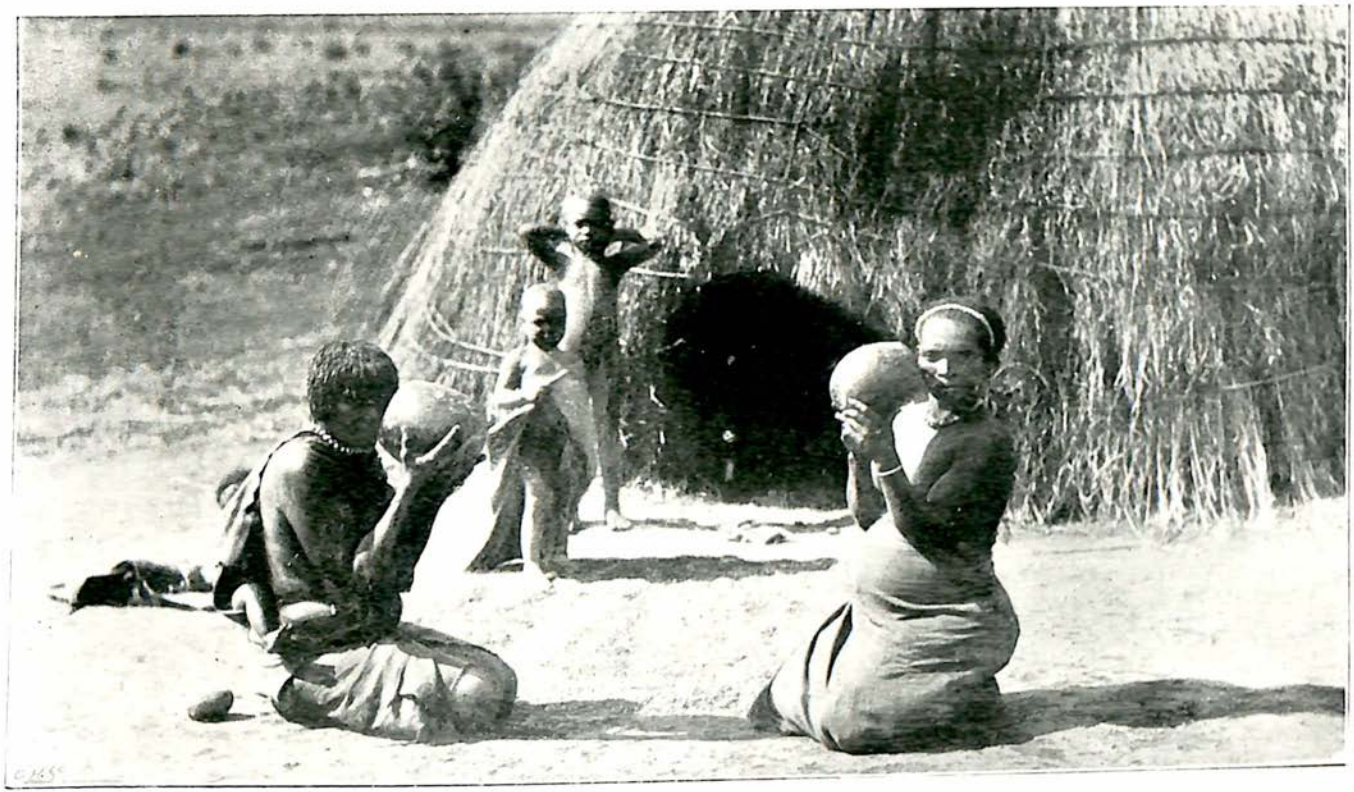
"are the children of the sky, born by her to her husband the sun." They are very graceful, these dusky little ones, and the girls are marvellous water-carriers. A wee black maiden will scurry along carrying on her head a dish or a vase almost as big as herself, and brimful of water. Up hill and down dale she goes, fleetly, very fleetly, and she spills never a drop.

The Zulus are unrivalled huntsmen, and the merest boys can make and use their assegais with much skill. They are not as wolfishly clever in tracking game as the Queensland blacks were, but they have many times more endurance and real sagacity.

We use so many words (especially so many new words born of our expanding empire) without any exact certainty of their meaning, that it may not be impertinent for me to state what a kraal is. "Kraal" is a Dutch word. It means farm-yard. A Zulu kraal is a circular, roughly, but securely fenced in, roofless place, in which the herds and flock are kept at night. When in residence in the village, the Kaffir men and boys pass most of their time in the kraal. Every village or group of huts has a kraal. There the men and boys gossip and take snuff all day long. There all business is transacted, wars and raids and hunts determined upon, feuds bred and settled.

The men and the boys tend the cattle and the sheep. That work the women and the girls never have to do unless the men are away.

The housework, such as it is, the cooking, and the agriculture are left entirely to the women. Indeed, the Kaffir woman's share of hard work far exceeds the man's. For, while the Kaffir greatly values his woman, he perhaps chiefly values her as a useful chattel and drudge. He



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rarely pampers her. A Kaffir will wade or swim across a stream carrying nothing but his assegai, and not throw one poor glance behind to see how fares his wife, to whom he has left the transportation of all the children and of sundry unwieldy bundles. If the woman looks for any help, she looks to her half-grown daughters for it, and never to her sons. But neither mother nor daughters seem to mind or resent in the least. Such is the fashion, and therefore sacred, even in Kaffirland.

The Kaffirs are thrifty. A boy begins very early to hoard and save. He buries his money (or its equivalent) in the jungle. They have no coin of their own. When he has amassed enough he buys a cow. When he has acquired six or a dozen cows he buys a wife. There is a large mathematical difference between six cows and twelve cows. But in concluding the purchase both the quality of the cows and the quality of the girl are to be considered.

The children are taught no prayers, and have never heard of any god. They are a people absolutely without any religion. Strangely enough, they have extreme social morality. Nothing worse than an uncomfortable marriage ever by any chance befalls a Zulu girl. This is very inexplicable, but it is also very true. I wonder if, by chance, there is some germ of truth in the old Chinese theory—this theory: When it becomes necessary or even expedient to preach virtue to a people, that people is far gone in vice. It is a mistake to preach virtue to an innocent and right-living people (or indeed to any people), because to make a people realise virtue must also be to make them realise vice; and to realise vice is, sadly often, the first step towards practising it.

The Zulus practise polygamy of course, but they punish unlawful unchastity with death, in the very few instances of its occurrence; for this method of punishment seems to have absolutely exterminated the crime, if it can be said ever to have existed in Zululand.

The Kaffir children are industrious and active. They learn many forms of work, and work well. It is often said that the Kaffirs are lazy. This is unjust, I think. They have the siesta habit certainly. They like to lie and laze and dream for hours; but they have commensurate spells of activity, and then work hard and well. They never neglect their crops nor their live things; nor do they, to any culpable or even foolish extent, neglect their opportunities. They keep their persons very reasonably clean, as most dark-skinned peoples do. Surely that is not being very lazy. Of the five Kaffir tribes, the Zulus are the most industrious and their children are the brightest and the best cared-for.

The Kaffirs all practise circumcision.

The Kaffir children (of which the Zulus are the best-natured) play and live together amicably, seem attached to their kindred, but are not always kind to their dumb animals; and when they quarrel among themselves they quarrel with terrible ferocity, more like irritable old beasts than young children.

The Kaffirs are all nice, and even gentle, in their personal habits, and in this respect the children are most carefully trained and watched.

In one or two tribes, girls who are considered exceptionally beautiful are allowed to let their finger nails grow to a length of several inches. A savage custom strangely suggestive of Chinese civilisation.

The Kaffir kings (each tribe has a king) have their choice of all the maidens of the nation, and choose their wives somewhat after the fashion of the old Russian Tsars. They choose from all classes (for there is caste and class in Kaffirland), and almost every little Kaffir girl half hopes to some day be a Kaffir queen. A pretty plumpness is the crux of Kaffir beauty; and often the girls who are allowed to let their nails grow are encouraged to take but little exercise and to take much succulent sustenance. Every girl knows that if she meets the king's selection, her father will be paid for her at ten times the normal rate.

Even the plumpest of the Kaffir girls are good and willing walkers. During a Kaffir courtship the maiden visits the youth, never he her. And unless a Kaffir can walk for ten or twenty miles to be wooed and then walk home again, and do it day after day, her matrimonial chances are poor. She is almost always a persistent pedestrian.

Half the Kaffir boys serve an apprenticeship at smelting and smithing. Most of the girls weave well. And every Kaffir girl learns to make long, strong water-baskets.

The little Kaffirs are taught to believe in the old Mosaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But the Kaffir out-Herods Moses and believes in two eyes for one. Personally I have a savage liking and an ineradicable respect for that same old law. The Kaffirs are trustworthy if you trust them; untrustworthy if you mistrust them. And they teach that social policy to their children. Again my contempt for them is bounded—very bounded.

The selection of the fittest is the rule of Kaffir military enlistment. Once a year, all the lads who are under

fifteen and over fourteen are pressed into an "approbation regiment." At the end of twelve months all who are regarded as undesirable soldiers are sent back into civil life. The others and fitter are put into a military kraal of their own and under the supervision of several well-tried warriors, or they are, in small detachments, incorporated with old regiments in established kraals or headquarter yards.

The Zulus have a great annual festival in which the children are allowed to join, and to which they look forward avidiously. The king gives a barbaric and most kingly feast interspersed with a mad festival of dance and shout and song, and crowned with a bull-fight.

The Zulu bull-fight is far less of an international scandal than the Spanish bull-fight is. The Zulus fight but one bull at each yearly festival. They attack him unarmed, and slaughter him in fair fight by choking his neck or breaking his back. Often he has a good deal of revenge before he dies. And he is killed for use as well as for amusement. His carcase is borne in triumph, upon his victor's shoulders. The women and children follow with songs and antics of wild African jubilation. He is roasted on a great fire, and his strength passes into the person of the king and his flesh into the digesting of the king's subjects.

A misshapen or sickly baby is, in every tribe, exposed to die, and in many tribes the same fate befalls any weakly child. But, if the child is more than a few hours old, the mother is allowed to unobtrusively succour it, and almost invariably does.

Most Kaffir children have considerable talent in moulding human and animal figures out of clay.

The son of a Kaffir's great or principal wife inherits the father's wealth to the entire exclusion of all half-brothers, no matter how much older than the great wife's son the small wives' sons may be. If a man be wealthy, he may leave something to each wife's eldest son. But such portions must be small, and the "great" son can almost always successfully dispute even the meagre portion of the Kaffir Ishmaels. To his credit, led me record that he very rarely does so dispute. Should a Kaffir die without sons, his brothers are his heirs, or, failing brothers, his king is. His daughters can under no circumstances inherit anything he leaves, nor can their issue.

A dead man's brothers are the guardians of his minor children. But, as a rule, a Kaffir widow returns to her own kindred, and her children, with their guardians' permission, go with her. The Kaffir law is very severe on a guardian who betrays his trust, misuses his wards, or squanders their property.

A destitute orphan girl is brought up by the chief. And when she is bought into marriage the chief receives her bridal fee.

A parent may punish his children. But unjust or over-harsh punishment is most severely recompensed.

A Kaffir village is usually composed of the hut of one patriarchal man, and the surrounding huts of his male descendants. Often four generations are comprised by the householders of a Kaffir village.

The Kaffirs resort to unique methods of driving away the ravenous elephants that often descend, with the descending night, upon the well-cared-for grain fields and garden plots. Noise is the chief and most effective weapon employed. I have been told that at such times

the Kaffir mothers beat their children to make them cry and shriek, to add to the elephant-affrighting noise. But I do not believe this. The story is not well authenticated. And the method of reaching a desired end sounds altogether too civilised. It is too suggestive of "nerves."

When Kaffir twins are born only one is allowed to live.

Slits are cut in the arms of every new-born child, and into the incisions the medicine-man rubs a most irritating unguent. This is repeated day after day—to the great agony of the child, but immensely to its future profit. For the pain so caused ensures the infant lifelong prosperity. After the third or fourth day of cutting and inoculating, the child is washed and dried in the smoke of a very smoky fire. Then it is thickly painted with red ochre. Then, if it lives, it is put into a sling of monkey skin, and tied upon its mother's back. Usually the sling-cradle is elaborately and even beautifully ornamented.

CHAPTER XIX.

CINGALESE CHILDREN.

"There is nothing can equal the tender hours
When life is first in bloom,
When the heart, like a bee in a wild of flowers,
Finds everywhere perfume;
When the present is all, and its question not
If those flowers shall pass away,
But pleased with its own delightful lot,
Dreams never of decay."

CEYLON—surely the most famous island in the Orient; Ceylon, "the priceless pearl-drop pendant from the brow of India"; Ceylon, the "Isle of Palms," the supposed Garden of Eden, the reputed sanctuary of Adam and Eve after their banishment—has given rise to more literature, both imaginative and thoughtful, picturesque and profound, than any other island of its area in the world. With the exception of our own British Isles, perhaps no other island has been so sung, so bepraised, both in poetry and prose, as Ceylon, the flower-decked gem-casket of the Indian Ocean. Volume after volume has been written about Cingalese history—a wonderful history; about Cingalese architecture, Cingalese ruins, Cingalese antiquities—a marvellous trio. Cingalese literature and Cingalese drama have inspired many an able *litterateur* in almost every part of Europe. Ceylon's flora has been the *motif* of many books; Ceylon's

gem wealth the theme of many pens. Tomes have been written about the birds of its air, the beasts of its jungles, and the iridescent fishes of its seas. The student and the lover of the Orient, who would know something of the customs and the characteristics of the many and always interesting peoples who dwell in Ceylon, will find here in London a library of books, authentic and delightful books, about Ceylon. And yet in all those books almost no mention is made, and absolutely no half-adequate, or even meagerly detailed account is given, of Ceylon's chief wealth.

I call Ceylon the richest island in the world—not because of its pearls, pink and white; not because of its sapphires and cat's-eyes, its garnets and moonstones, its cinnamon stones and carbuncles, its amethysts and its rubies; not because of its opulence of fruit, of flower, and of precious woods; not because of its richness in temples and relics of Gautama; not because of its affluence of story, of history, of poetry, and of tradition; but because of its wealth of children.

Ceylon is the garden of children, the paradise island of children. It is flowing with the milk of their happiness, it is sweet with the honey of their mirth. And yet almost nothing (I think I am neither exaggerating nor misinformed), almost nothing has been written about those children. Some years ago I had, in the interest of the accuracy of some newspaper work I was doing, occasion to search very thoroughly through all the literature at my disposal which related to Ceylon and her peoples. The subject specially in my mind was of a far different kind from the subject of this book; but even so, I was sharply struck with the more than paucity of

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information about Cingalese children. I see by my note-book that I then either read, or had carefully read for me by a lady who was helping me, a hundred and seven books and articles relating to Ceylon. They were in English, in French, and in German, and were, I believe, the cream of European literature concerning this island. In those hundred and more books there were not, if I remember, three consecutive pages about Cingalese children. And yet in Ceylon, with which I was altogether infatuated, I saw nothing that so charmed or so interested me as its child-wealth; nothing that so repaid careful study or so triumphantly bore close inspection as its great variety of happy children.

Ceylon is the home of the children of a dozen races. Tamil children, Hindu children, Parsi children, Afghan children, Madrassi children, Mahommedan children, Kashmíri children, Javanese children, Chinese children, and Japanese children pass each other in the streets of Colombo, and add colour and variety to a scene that is already voluptuous in both variety and colour. European children fair of face, dainty and white of garment, crush the ferns as they race across the sweet-scented lemon-grass, and pelt each other with balls of acacia flowers or the lovely grey blossoms of the curious potato tree. But we will study this charming company of little people one by one as we meet each in his proper home. And with the rhododendron forests, the laughing waterfalls, the temple-topped hills, and the grove of mingled cinnamon and palms for background, we will only try now to picture some of the youngsters who are (in a very antique sense) native to Ceylon—the children of the Cingalese.

Cingalese children are born beautiful. They are born

happy. Above all, they are born Buddhists. They are shrewd, obedient, and kindly, sweetly clean, fairly industrious, and often very sly. The most likeable of them are found not in Kandy or Colombo, or in the fashionable hill resort which Europeans most visit, but in the interior and wild places of the island, where Occidental civilisation has not yet laid its defacing finger upon Cingalese customs and Gautama-taught morality.

Every Cingalese child can swim, and in Colombo hundreds of boys earn a far from precarious livelihood by displaying to Europeans their aquatic accomplishments. "Throw away, sir! throw silver! throw away! throw away! I dive! I dive! throw silver, sir!" is invariably one of the first sounds that welcome you to Colombo if your boat anchors in daylight. And you cannot walk by the seashore or the margin of a lake where English is at all spoken without being importuned by a score of juvenile, naked, water artists. And there are many places in Ceylon where the "Throw away, sir! throw silver!" of the eager boys, and the "Lady take" of the insistent pedlars was the only English I ever heard. As a rule the boys dive in herds. Ten or twenty or often many more, will pack themselves upon a small, curious, one-sailed boat. The boat has been made by hollowing out a palm trunk and attaching to it a quaint outrigger of lighter wood or bamboo. Several of the boys (many or few, as the breeze is soft or stiff) will plant themselves upon this outrigger and so prevent the craft from capsizing. The other boys row or sail the boat out to where the men-of-war and the passenger boats of many nations lie at anchor.

The rowers chant and sway as they propel the little

canoe-like barque. When they reach a favourable spot they ply their trade in earnest. "Throw away, sir! I dive!" comes the clear cry from each childish throat. Their eyes dance, their teeth gleam, and their arms wave in wild entreaty. They are well-nigh irresistible, at least most Europeans find them so. The coveted coin is thrown. In they plunge, all but the "balance boys," who must stay on the outrigger. Up they come, dripping, shouting, laughing, and triumphant, and never—almost never—without the coin. One of them has it in his mouth or in his fist. He clambers up on to the edge of his boat, crosses his arms upon his breast, as a polite Cingalese should, and bows his thanks. Then they all cry, "Throw more, sir!" and the performance begins all over again. And you may have as many acts in it as you like to pay for—a coin at a time.

Cingalese children almost never quarrel. They all sing. They all dance. They all love festivals, and love to watch the devil dances and the stilt dancers. They all live largely out-of-doors. Their primitive little houses are very bare and very clean, and are used as little as possible. The children are strong, active, and beautiful. I have seen many a country-bred Cingalese boy pull himself on to the shaft of a cart moving at full speed (which is not very fast in Ceylon) and leap lightly over the back of the placid bullock. There is a minimum of want in Ceylon, and the children take no heed (or need to) of what they shall eat or drink on the morrow.

The girls are early trained in the few simple details of Cingalese housewifery. A little maid of six can "make bazaar" (go shopping) and cook the family curry. Ah! what wouldn't I give for some now (heaped in half an

empty cocoanut shell, eaten from my fingers or a scoop of cocoanut bark), perfumed with tender young leaves of the coffee plant and liberally seasoned with minced cocoanut! Many a girl marries at ten. In one part of the island they are all expert lace-makers and needlewomen.

The Cingalese babies are rather fair, and darken wonderfully as they grow. Until they are twelve they run about naked, but about their waists a bright string is knotted, and on the string hangs a charm or a coin. The rich often tie a coin of some value about their toddlers, to show that the mites go naked from choice, and not from stress of financial circumstances.

When a Cingalese family expects a guest, the children are crowned with flowers, and are among the first to bid him welcome and show him hospitality.

Cingalese children are naturally intelligent. They are naturally observant. They live almost altogether out-of-doors. It follows that they are rather expert and accurate, though altogether unconscious, amateur naturalists. I learned most that I know about the fish and the shells of Ceylon from one Devanaygam, a keen-eyed, ten-year-old member of the fisher caste. And Carolis—he was twelve, and had spent most of his dozen years in the jungle and on his father's farm-village in the interior—told me more of the flowers, the trees, the animal life, and the human customs of his home than I have found in many a well-reputed book of travel and of research. Devanaygam was an expert catcher of striped mullet and of crimson. He knew where the silver sardines swarmed and where the sier-fish and the soles were apt to dart between the schools of mackerel and of dories.

He introduced me to a huge saw-fish. It was fourteen feet long, and not of his catching. He brought me once a string of red sea-perch, and once showed me a huge fire-fish. I had never seen scarlet so deep as on those perch. I have never seen red redder than on the brilliant scales of that great fire-fish. Devanaygam taught me that the fish of Cingalese waters are as rich and marvellous in colour as the fish of Hawaii. He knew fish that were purple, and fish that were ochre, fish that were lake and pink. He told me of the green lustrous fish, which he called "sea parrots." A learned European vouched for the truth of Devanaygam's statement, and with care and exertion taught me the wonderful Latin name of the verdant, slippery beauties. I have forgotten the Latin name, but I remember Devanaygam and his "sea parrots." I have a rude, crude picture this fisher lad gave me—the picture of a "flower parrot." The fish is banded irregularly with belts of crimson and grey, purple and blue, and stripes of emerald and amber, and is streaked narrowly from head to tail-fin with black. Devanaygam was an enthusiastic collector of shells. The natives are very proud of their pretty bullocks, and necklace them with bells and shells. And shells are the favourite toys of many Cingalese children.

Carolis belongs to the highest class of the Cingalese, the tillers of the soil; and may not play with Devanaygam. Often some low caste family is wealthy, and some neighbouring high caste family is poor. But even so, the stern caste rules are never relaxed, the barrier between plebeian and patrician is never broken down. The rich fisherman sits below the poor farmer, and makes way for him in the street. Yet in Ceylon caste is a purely social and in no

way a religious institution. All castes do reverence to the priests, who may have been born of any caste; for Buddha teaches that right living and not high birth confers caste. Carolis and Devanaygam are both staunch Buddhists. Ceylon is to-day the stronghold of Buddhism, the Mecca of every devout follower of Buddha, be that devotee Siamese, Burmese, Chinese, or Japanese. Both boys have been taught that Buddha loves content and gratitude, chastity and temperance, forgiveness and patience, and that he enjoins persistent cheerfulness; that he abhors pride and covetousness, anger, dishonesty, and falsehood. Above all they are taught to hold the meanest form of animal life sacred, for Gautama Buddha commanded, "From the meanest insect up to man thou shalt not kill." Carolis's earliest memory is the day he made his first offering to Buddha; an offering of white lotus-roses and scarlet passion flowers, of the great creamy blossoms of the temple flower and hanging tendrils of the graceful cocoanut blossoms—as many as his baby fingers could clutch, and so overpowering in perfume that it almost took his baby breath away. He was very sweet himself, for he had been well rubbed with perfumed oil. He was clad in a tightly bound *comboy*—a straight, graceful garment or cloth that fell from his hips to his plump little be-ringed feet. For everyday wear the *comboy* is loosely knotted about the waist, but on occasions of ceremony it must be very tightly girt. He rode to the temple gate, rode astride his handsome mother's hip. All Cingalese babies are carried so. From the temple gate he toddled to where a huge Buddha, hewn from wood or stone, lay in cool shadowed repose. Carolis gravely threw his sweet-smelling blossoms at Buddha's feet, and toddled

blithely back into the sunshine. The pitcher plants twined about the trunks of the tamarind trees. From the great jak trees, with their fruit as large as pumpkins, were suspended the hanging nests of the weaver bird. Verbenas ran among the clumps of heliotrope that grew at the feet of the trees from which the great round white moonflowers threw a shower of incense-like perfume. The green parrots gorged upon the gauva fruit, sharpened their beaks upon the bark of the cinnamon, or wantonly nipped the stems of the high-growing, flaming, flaring shoe flowers, and flung the great scarlet blooms at Carolis's feet. And the boy was very happy, and sang gay snatches of song to the soft accompaniment of cricket chirrup and murmur of insect life. Both Carolis and Devanaygam speak Cingalese—a musical tongue almost identical with Pali, the sacred language of Gautama.

When I knew Carolis he was vastly learned in much delightful lore. He knew the haunts and habits of the strange, delicately feathered ruff bird. He had fathomed the depths of bullock nature, and sagely informed me once, "Lady want bullock go; lady pull bullock's tail must." He knew where to find the rare Salvadora (the true mustard tree of Scripture), the wild violet beds, the hiding-places of the guelder-roses, and the buttercups. He knew the habits of the flying fox, of Ceylon's five monkey families, of the sagacious elephant, the graceful spotted deer, and the red elk. He had found many a nest of the curious brown owl, which he called the "devil bird" because of its demoniacal cry. He knew where to find the turtle's precious eggs. He knew when the apricot-like fruit of the nutmeg trees was ripe and it was time to tear the pulp from off the kernel, and to dry the nut's

crimson, lace-like wrapper, which is brown when we buy it, and which we call "mace." He knew that the cucumber-like water-banana quenched thirst, and that the floury potato-banana stayed hunger, that the cinnamon-banana tickled the palate, excited the appetite, and spiced the breath, and that the pine-apple-banana had the bouquet of a costly, delicate wine. And he was no mean pharmacopœist; for he knew that boiled tamarinds cured fever, and that bandages of plaintain leaves allayed the torment of burn or abrasure. He knew the medicinal qualities of the bark of the quinine tree, of the hard globular wood apple, and of a score more of fruit and leaves.

Cingalese children often have strange pets. I have seen three boys and a baby girl riding upon the back of an immense tame tortoise.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CHILDREN OF EGYPT.

"Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.
What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,—
That to the world are children;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below."

THE children of five different races form essential elements of Egyptian child-life. The children of the Copts are by far the most characteristic of Egypt, and the most purely Egyptian—indeed they are the only pure Egyptians; but they are outnumbered more than ten times by the children of the Mohammedan Egyptians. The children of the Turks come third in numbers, Syrian and Jewish children fourth, and Armenian children a meagre fifth.

The Turkish, Armenian, Syrian, and Jewish children all know the customs and enjoy or endure the "bringing-up" peculiar to the different races from which they spring. But both those customs and methods of rearing and educating, as well as the children themselves, are modified

and tinged by conditions common to all Egypt and to all who dwell there. The Mohammedan Egyptians and the Copts are the two races indigenous to the land of their residence. They are both (one in part and one in whole) the descendants of the ancient Egyptians. And yet of the five races who make up the basic bulk of the Egyptian population there is more contrast, more difference between (difference of custom, difference of thought, difference of feeling), and less love lost between the Copts and the Mohammedan Egyptians than there is between any other of the ten pairs into which those five races may be divided. The hatreds that exist between the Armenians and the Turks, between the Turk and the Jew, are innocuous hatreds of milk compared to the mutual hatred of the Coptic and the Mohammedan Egyptians. The Copts regard their Moslem kinsmen as renegades and mongrels. And whichever be the apostate people, certainly the Egyptian Mohammedans have diluted the blood and forsaken largely the customs of the old Egyptians who were their ancestors and the ancestors of the Copts. The bitter antagonism between the two really native races, out-intensifying, as it does, all other antagonisms in Egypt, is but one more black example of the bitterness, the superlative bitterness, of the old, old story of civil feud. There is no war so terrible, so vicious, so relentless, as a civil war. There is no quarrel so bitter as the quarrel between brother and brother. And so, though on the streets of Cairo you may see a Turkish boy playing with a young Jew or Copt lad, you will never see the children of the two Egyptian races playing together, much less their elders fraternising. Civility towards each

other is the golden Oriental rule among all the children of Egypt, save only when children of the two kindred but antagonistic native races meet.

The Mohammedan Egyptians (who may be divided into townspeople and *fellaheen*, or peasant class) are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians, but their descent has been very much blended with alien bloods, and they have, in the course of the centuries, so changed in feature and in habits that their progenitors could not possibly be expected to recognise them. They are strict Mohammedans.

The Copts are one of the most unique peoples on earth. They are Christians and the unmixed and the unchanged descendants of the Egyptians who lived and loved when the Pyramids were young. The Coptic Church is one of the most interesting of existing Churches. They shun all people of other creeds, and never marry out of their own race and Church, and so have preserved to a wonderful degree the physique and the manners of their remote ancestors. They look startlingly like the men and women carved upon the ancient tombs and temples. Many a boy playing upon the banks of the old Nile looks for all the world as if he had stolen off one of the treasured fragments in our British Museum. I remember a quaint old Englishman, a fellow-traveller and a scholar, who, late in life, made a tour of the world, and was rather homesick, telling me that he felt almost at home in Lower Egypt. He had been a Museum *habitué* for thirty years, and when he reached the Nile the Copts seemed almost like old friends from the cool Egyptian corridors of Great Russell Street.

Like the climate in which they live, the children of

Egypt (of whatever racial subdivision) are healthy and to a degree equable of temper. They look at life very differently from the children of Europe, and they see and regard natural phenomena as differently. They never hunt for wild flowers in shady woods. Egypt is not a land of flower-plenty, and has but few trees. There are palms about every village, and a few palm-groves elsewhere, but other trees are exceptional and exceptionally placed. They do not romp in the meadows, or shout by the seashore. Perhaps there is nothing they like more than to lie among the lizards on the Nile's sandy side and sun themselves as the lizards do, half dreaming, half sleeping the hot hours away, where "the spotted lilies quiver by the lazy lagging river." Except those who live on the shores of the Mediterranean, they know almost nothing of rain, and none of them would enjoy, as all healthy English children do, playing out in it. At Cairo it usually rains hard once a year, and sprinkles two or three times. At Thebes many a three-year-old boy has never seen a real rain storm. One such storm in four years is the Theban rule. But they all know and fear the mighty whirlpool of sand which almost constantly, and with indescribable velocity, tears its fearful course up and down and across the length and breadth of Egypt. And they all know and admire the beautiful, delicate pictures, mirage-painted, which are hung almost daily upon Egypt's strange atmospheric walls.

Every child in Egypt knows of and loves the Nile. The Egyptians hold the Nile as dear as the Romans did their Father Tiber, to whom they used to pray. And well the Egyptians may. For all the cultivated land in Egypt is the deposit of the Nile—a deposit begun man knows not

when, and Science herself cannot tell him. Egyptian children call the Nile "El-Bahr," which means the sea, and those who live far from it are always ambitious, with childhood's keen ambition, to some day stand beside it and to drink of its water, which is sweet and wholesome beyond that of most rivers.

The children of the Copts and of the fellahs are more or less skilled in garden lore and in the catching of the splendid varieties of fish and wild fowl with which Egypt's lake-wealth teems. The girls are taught to make date mats and skins. The dates are gathered half ripe, are dried, and then pressed into the various articles into which Egyptian ingenuity and the slim fingers of Egyptian children contrive to turn them.

The boys who work in the gardens have rather a luscious time of it. They are allowed—oh! happy boys, to pilfer to heart's and stomach's full content. And though few flowers grow where the picturesque water-wheels spread wide their cooling spray and keep the arid gardens' thirst well quenched, the fruits are sweet and plentiful. There are musky melons — yours for the picking — and water melons like those that grow about the Bay of Naples. There are grapes—purple, and white, and pink. There are figs and sycamore figs, and fat, pulpy pomegranates. There are pungent limes and fragrant peaches, oranges, apricots, and indescribable citrons. The bananas are always in season, and the Copt boys tend them with exceptional assiduity, and eat them with added relish, because the Copts believe that the banana is one of the fruits that throve in the garden of Eden. There are prickly pears and big olives, and perhaps best of all the fruit of the lotus. And there are vegetables, too, varied

and plentiful—vegetables that we know and more that we do not, we who know but the markets of London. But the small Egyptian is an eater of fruit far more than an eater of vegetables—he is a hearty eater of gourds and of lettuce. Wise with the wisdom of unperverted natural instinct, he eats tomatoes and egg-fruit as our boys apples, and I have sometimes thought that the Egyptians could sustain life on cucumbers alone. Certainly no other people eats so many or grows such delicious ones.

All Egyptian children are kind to dumb animals. The boys of the farmer class make pets, friends, and playmates of the creatures they tend. The Moslem children are devoted to cats, as a matter of course, for Mohammed, who abhorred dogs and held them unclean, doted on pussies. And in Cairo, one of the most popular institutions is a "Royal Foundation for the Support of Destitute Cats." Every Moslem child has a pet cat, and the naughtiest child of them all is never unkind to that tabby.

Egyptian children are rather queer-looking little objects. They are spare of limb and most decidedly, what has been elegantly termed, "distended of abdomen." But as they grow they improve in form until they reach maturity and loveliness at one and the same time. They never grow very fat, nor are the girls ever fattened as are the girls of many North African countries.

The Egyptians, unlike most other Africans, do not admire fatness. The fellah children all squint, a habit contracted, I fancy, from being constantly in the strong sunlight—a habit which gives them a sleepy, sly, and very Oriental appearance.

The children of the abjectly poor go barefooted every-

where. Alas! I have seen them do it in the dead of winter on the frozen streets of Edinburgh. And the children of the Egyptian poor run with naked feet though the dust of summer and the mud of winter. But there are no other children on the globe so variously, so elaborately, and so significantly shod as are the children of Egypt's upper and middle classes. In Egypt, class, station, and caste are indicated clearly by footgear. Shoes, boots, and sandals, even more than turbans and other headgear, or lack of headgear, are the badges of their wearers' personal, social, and religious quality, and of their financial quantity. The servant class is especially marked and demarked by the shapes and the colours of its shoes. All this is as true of children as of the grown-ups, and an observant traveller may soon learn to know to what state of life any little Egyptian has been born by glancing at the covering of that little Egyptian's feet.

In Cairo, and in any other of Egypt's Mohammedan cities, there are institutions called "collegiate mosques"—institutions admirable in their executives, in their curriculums, and in their results. Attached to these prayer-house-colleges are classes which any Moslem boy may join without any fee—classes in which he may receive, if he has the capacity, an education as adequate, as profound, as thorough, and as suitable as our best European Universities offer to the European youths who are blessed with big purses.

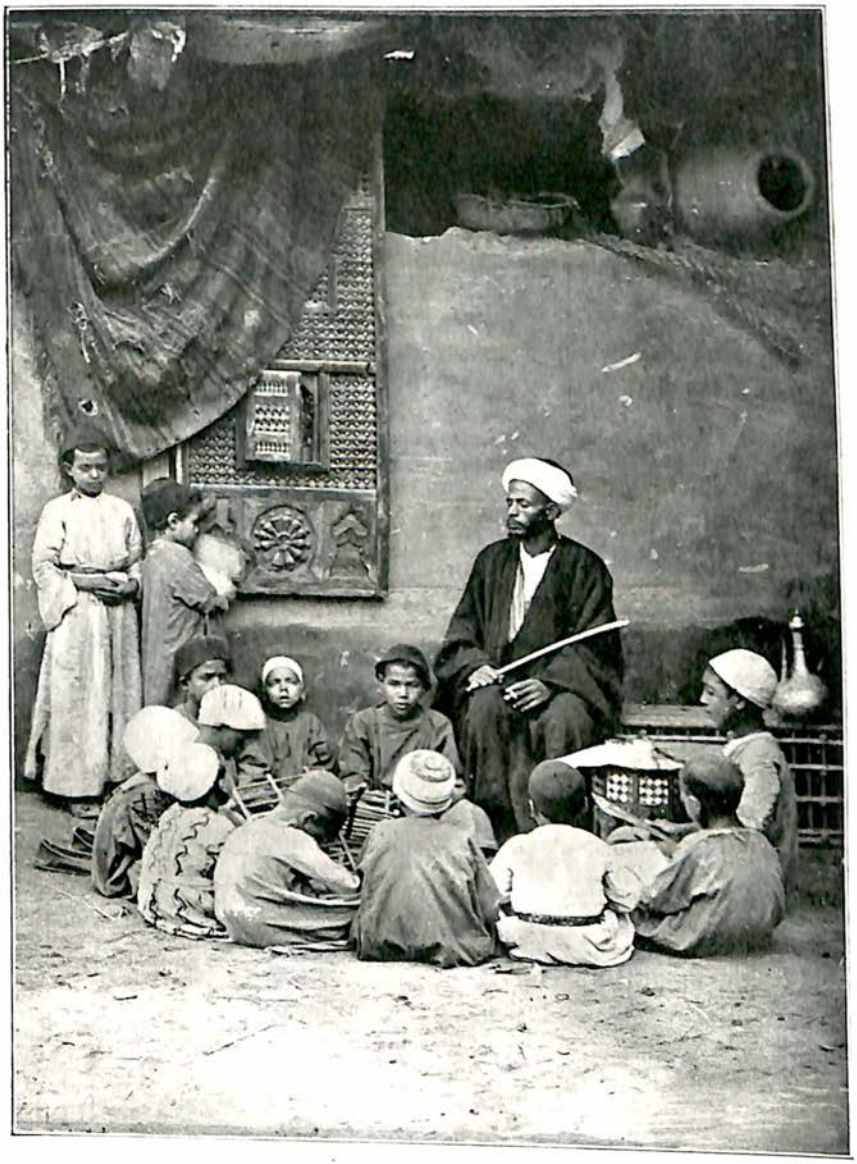
And throughout Egypt (except, perhaps, in those few places in which the Copts overwhelmingly predominate) there is an abundant sprinkling of free primary schools. In those schools the boys are taught to read and write, and they commit the Koran to memory. They are taught

little or nothing else. To me—and I venture to commend my point of view to your consideration—the system which refrains from overburdening the young minds of the masses with information which they can neither understand nor use profitably or happily, is even more admirable than the system which spreads a feast of mental food, which gives a lavish bounty of education to the exceptionally minded, the system which declines to "let the guinea gild the straightened forehead of the fool." If our children were taught only what they could learn we were a happier and better people!

But I am writing of the unenlightened children of dark Africa, not of the enlightened children of luminous Europe.

The average little Egyptian boy is taught nothing much at school, except to read, write, and recite the Koran. But he learns other things in the more practicable academies of home and street. He is a mathematician by instinct. He is swift and sure of memory by force of daily habit, constant training, and heritage. What he knows he knows thoroughly, and the limitations of his bright warm life are such, and such is the contentment of his bright warm nature, that he needs to know no more than what he does know.

I remember once reading (and it was most authoritative in tone) this supremely superficial statement: "The girls of Egypt are taught nothing but needlework." That is the statement of blatant ignorance and braggadocio. Needlework is the only art or industry, the only branch of learning in which the majority of Egyptian girls ever have cut-and-dried lessons at all, as lessons in our insular understanding go. But they learn a score of other things, which Girton might well be proud to learn how to teach.



AN EGYPTIAN SCHOOL

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They learn to please and be pleased. They learn thoroughly the two great lessons of woman's life—they learn to be ruled and to rule.

It is often said that Egyptian children are dirty. They are almost never dirty. The children of the masses, and frequently the children of the middle classes, are often dusty in the extreme, because they live in and move about in a land of extreme dust. But dust and dirt are two very different things. Dust is not necessarily dirt. Sandy dust, such as Egypt's dust, is most clean matter. Indeed sand is an efficacious, if a drastic, substitute for soap. The children of poorer Egypt are dusty and sand-powdered, but they are not dirty.

The children of the Egyptian rich are dainty of appearance and of apparel. They are as well groomed as are the children of the English patricians, as tastefully garmented as the children of the Parisian *beau monde.* The children of the poor and of the intermediary classes are often, and of a purpose, unkempt of appearance.

The Egyptians share with almost all the other North Africans an almost incredible fear of the "Evil eye." They believe (among the ten thousand other inexplicable beliefs of the believers in Evil 'eye) that a child praised is a child cursed. And lest some Evil-eyed passer-by praise, and in praising blight, their children, they aim to keep those little ones unattractive of apparel and of coiffure.

The children of the rich are pampered to a degree; and, as in all Oriental countries, the girls are more petted, more indulged than their brothers are. The children of the poor live in a state of comparatively uncoerced, unfettered freedom that we can but think somewhat

synonymous with a state of neglect. But they live in a land where children grow almost as the flowers grow, and if it must be owned that among the Egyptian poor, parents, after their children have reached a still very tender age, take less care of those children than right-minded European parents do, it ought to be owned also that it is greatly to the credit of those Egyptian parents that they respect the individualities of those children. Above all, it is to the supreme credit of Egyptian parents that, as a most generally observed rule, they "anger not their children."

If Egyptian children do not always obey their parents it is, I believe, chiefly, if not altogether, because those parents do not demand obedience. Egyptian children do indeed honour their parents. Age, paternity, and maternity are revered by all young Egypt. Indeed the fifth commandment is far more obeyed out of Christendom than it is in Christendom. A terrible statement this I make! Yes, it is. But it is true. Go and live among the Chinese, among the Persians, among the natives of North Africa, and then deny it, if you can.

Egyptian girls enjoy more freedom than girls do in most Moslem countries. They all, except the most closely-haremed, learn to ride, and ride well. They do not use side saddles, and their ponies are small asses, usually white of hair, pink of ear, and soft of eye.

Not to marry or be given in marriage while very young is the greatest disgrace that can befall an Egyptian boy or girl. It is a disgrace that almost never does fall. Their marriage customs are attractively picturesque. But they do not quite legitimately pertain to a study of Egyptian child-life. An unmarried Egyptian girl of

seventeen is a very old maid indeed. But Egyptian children pass into maturity so early that we cannot with any justice speak or think of the Egyptian as a people of child-marriages. Most Egyptian children smoke, and girls more than boys. The girls, like their mothers, gorge themselves on sweetmeats, take but little exercise, and yet do not grow gross, perhaps do not because they spend so much time in their tepid, perfumed baths.

All Egyptian children love music, and are intuitively musical; but only the children of the poor are taught music. They are all soft-voiced and sweet-voiced. The songs of the boatmen of the Nile, the calls of the street-sellers of small wares and of fruits, are all charmingly musical. And many of those boatmen and of those street-vendors are the merest boys. Among the poor the girls who are educated for the song-profession belong to a class distinctly different from that of dancing girls. In Egypt music is respected, and the youngest and prettiest of its maiden votaries are almost always respectable.

When an Egyptian baby is born, its mother anxiously waits for the day when it shall first see, and notice, a crocodile. All children are taught to gaze intently upon every crocodile they see by chance. For the Egyptians believe that to see a crocodile brings luck, especially to children. The baby who notices this reptile has a fair and auspicious start in life. And many a sick child is carried miles and miles that it may look upon a crocodile, since all Egypt knows that so to look will cure illness and stimulate appetite.

Among the well-to-do Egyptian Armenians, christenings are most elaborate and extravagant functions. The festivities at such a christening are very like those at a wedding

in the "Arabian Nights." Friends and foes are feasted in the house and out. Wines, sweetmeats, cigarettes, pipes, coffee are handed about freely in all the adjacent streets. Black servants carry trays of these and other refreshments far and near, and press them upon rich and poor. In the house the provision of good cheer is lavish and sumptuous. An elaborate fantasia is executed. Expensive musicians and dancing girls perform; Arab minstrels clang their strange, blatant, but not unmusical instruments; and bands of half-veiled, half-clad, begarlanded women croon and cry the famous sweet *Zaghareet.*

Among the city poor many of the boys earn their living as water-sellers. They are as picturesque as any of the myriad of picturesque details of Cairene street-life. Each carries a skin of water and a metal cup. For an infinitesimal coin you may quaff the contents of a brimful cup. And if you give the seller a coin whose value is a few—a very few—pence, he will freely distribute to the eager street crowd all the contents of his water-skin, and all that thirsty crowd will bless you ere they drink, for you have done a "pious deed," a deed blessed of Allah; for you have given to the weary and heavy-laden poor, water, "without money and without price."

The donkey-boys of Egypt are quite an army—an industrial and industrious army. For a puny fee the donkey-boy will attend you as you ride his donkey (smaller, if possible, than himself sometimes), calling out shrilly, but sweetly, to all passers-by, "Out of the way!" prodding your patient but somewhat deliberate steed, and carrying on his own head as many of your goods and chattels, as many of your household wares as you can pile upon it, or like to have seen in the public streets at once.

GOSSIPS

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Very few Egyptian children ever beg: the country children never. The children of the poor have some surprising superstitions. For example, they, or rather those of them who are Mohammedans, believe that lemon smeared on to, and then licked off, certain parts of a mosque, will cure any disease; and the base of many an exquisitely carved porphyry pillar in many a lovely Egyptian mosque is clothed with well-salivated lemon juice and pulp. And hundreds of young Egyptians carry in their breasts, or in their turbans, or in their belts, a lemon—a lemon in readiness for use at every mosque entered.

The burial customs of Egypt are unique. Among the Moslems, boys follow every corpse to the grave, and as they walk, sing or recite loudly parts of the Koran.

Both in cities and villages many boys are fruit-sellers. They carry trays of fruit and of succulent vegetables—especially cucumbers—from door to door, crying, "Will you buy my fruit? Will you buy my cucumbers? Fruit! Cucumbers! Gathered in the morning's early dew, in fair gardens, by sweet modest maidens."

The fellaheen children live largely in the open. They live as the children of the Old Testament lived. They tend flocks, and garner grain, and learn to make the leathern pans into which they squeeze the milk of the patient buffalo cow. Almost all the ceremonies at their births and burials are ancient Egyptian rather than Mohammedan.

The beliefs and customs which are taught to the little Copts are so peculiar and so interesting that, lacking space to speak of them, I feel impelled to drop a hint to any reader who feels intelligently curious about them.

This is the hint: If you once begin to study the Copts you will not rest content with a little information; and the best way you can begin that study is to read the first lecture in Dean Stanley's *History of the Eastern Church.*

Most Egyptian children, of whatever race, are good-natured, and are all well-mannered.

CHAPTER XXI.

HAWAIIAN CHILDREN.

"All the rainbow's tints are spread
Over clouds, and fields, and bowers:
Lo, the proud carnation red!
Lo, that royal king of flowers!
Fragrant as 'tis glorious,—sweet
As 'tis stately,—ever true
To the dawn;—an emblem meet
Of this babe,—a floweret too!"

INDIVIDUALS whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. Nations which they would destroy they civilise. When Captain Cook and civilisation discovered the Hawaiian islands, those Islands were a-swarm with children, unclad, unlettered, unfettered, healthy, wicked little savages. To-day there are very few Hawaiian children in Hawaii. The nation stands upon the brink of extermination, lies somnolent in the slough of enervation. Missionaries and civilisation have done their work. The Hawaiians are reformed, almost reformed off the face of the earth. They are no longer given, as they were, to bloodshed, idol-worship, and other crimes that are heinous; but they are given to crimes that even in our outspoken *fin-de-siècle* journalism are nameless. They are being decimated by a leprosy that is a spawn of civilisation, and by other ills which, if less swift, are as deadly, as sure, and as putrid.

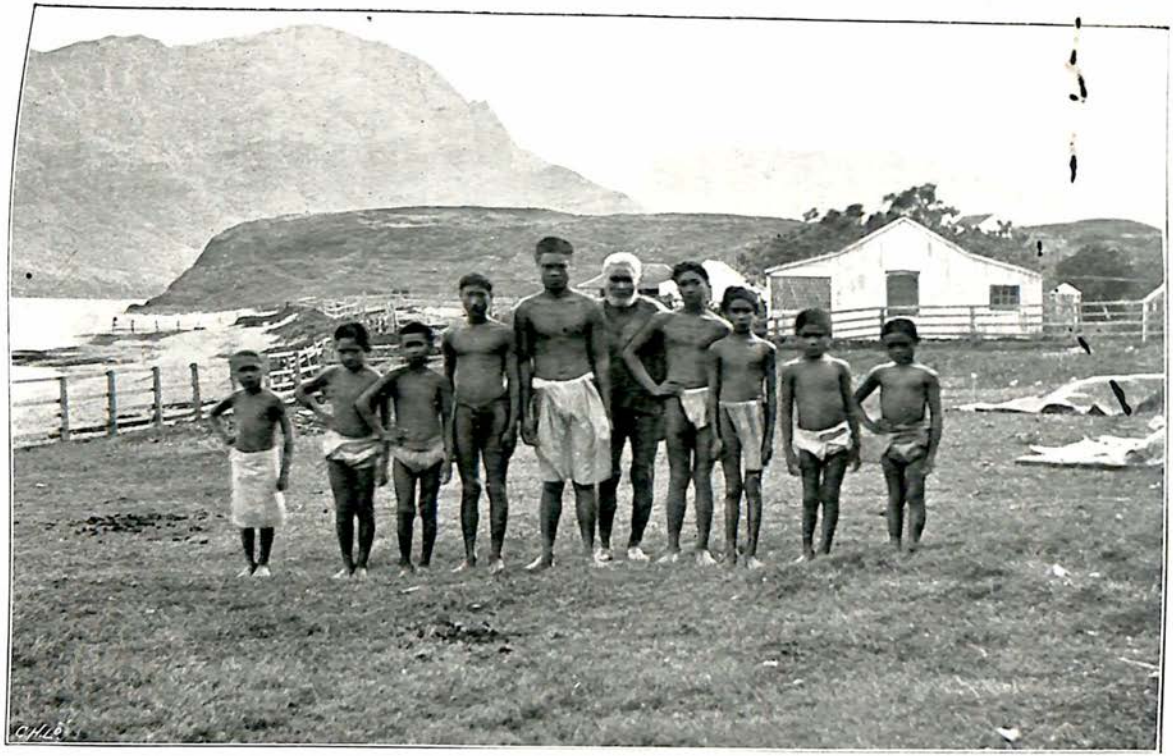
When Captain Cook discovered the Sandwich Islands—one hundred and twenty-one years ago — he found 400,000 natives there. In 1823 there were, according to the American missionaries, 140,000 Hawaiians in Hawaii. In 1832 the census returned a population of 130,313, and in 1878 there were not 45,000 natives in the Sandwich Islands; and last year (1898) there were but 24,000!

Fifty years ago a missionary writing of Hawaii said: "The perpetuity of the pure Hawaiian race there is daily becoming more and more doubtful; but, as it has been remarked of New Zealand, the natives, though melting away, are not lost. They are emerging into another and better class. In this process there lacketh not sin on man's part, but Providence will overrule it for good, and bring forth an order of things which shall be far better for the world and for the new race."

No, the process has not lacked sin on man's part—civilised man's part. But the Hawaiian natives have not emerged into a better class. Numerically they are all but extinct. And the deterioration of their quality has been more and sadder than the deterioration of their quantity. I lack space to prove this statement, but history is my witness, even missionary-written history.

The children of Hawaii to-day are peculiarly, sadly interesting—not because the United States has annexed Hawaii and forsworn the Monroe doctrine, but because they are the children of a peculiar and interesting ancestry—children sterile of posterity—the last leaves on a nation's tree of life.

Hawaiian children live in grass houses, which look photo-



AN OLD HAWAIIAN WITH HIS SONS AND GRANDSONS

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graphically like door-punctured haystacks. There are several things to be said in favour of these primitive homes. The materials of which they are built are to be had for the gathering. They keep out both cold and heat effectually. They are easily built. The merest toddlers pluck and weave the long, strong grasses which form the houses' walls and roofs. Many Hawaiian children live in wooden houses, but those houses are importations and excrescences. The children of Hawaii are Polynesian, and it is their nature to build their houses as birds do—of leaves, and stems, and grasses. However primitive their houses and scanty their garments, the little Hawaiians live on islands that are swathed, and swathed with verdure and bloom as a Japanese beauty is with garments. Civilisation itself has not killed, scarcely stunted, the teeming flower-life of Hawaii. The Sandwich Islands are coral-built and volcano-belched; but incomparable ferns and creepers twist about the coral reefs, and flowers as beautiful as they are big and pungent twine in and out of the smouldering lava clefts. Hawaiian children are the heritors of little or no literature, and yet they speak and write—those of them who can write—in the language of distinct poetry. They are learned in a limitless lore. Nature teaches them—Nature, who rears on many an unconsidered island a university greater than that which man at his best, and with his worthiest scholarship, has reared on the banks of the Isis. Children living in a spot so naturally superlative as Hawaii naturally think and speak in superlatives. In Hawaii the ottar-scented, hundred-stamened apparis, pink and white, and mighty of petal, flaunts its splendid beauty above the sightless lava seams. In Hawaii pink and scarlet butterflies light

and relight all day above the ever green beds of the feathery asparagus. There the begonias that are the nurslings of our conservatories grow to tree-hood, and yet lose nothing of the delicacy and individuality of leaf, the satin beauty for which we prize them. In Hawaii the bread-fruit tree hangs out its bright green, eight-lobed leaves, and drops at man's feet its fruit-loaves of burnished gold. Thousands of coffee trees lift their handsome heads decked with fragrant scarlet berries. Roses, unmatched save by those that grow in the gardens of Kashmír, grow among the stalks of the lace-like, plumed bamboos. The rich dark green of the moon-leaved koa backgrounds the white and purple passion flowers and the ethereal leaves of the sensitive plant. But to name half the flowers of Hawaii were to write the *dramatis personæ* of Nature's greatest flower epic.

The volcanoes that upheave and the storms that beat about Hawaii teach the children of Hawaii to express themselves in a vividness, a force, a directness, a splendid simplicity of language that is altogether Homeric, and the flowers, that patch with loveliness the gashes that those volcanoes' lava makes, teach those children to speak, think, and write with a dainty and elaborate nicety of language unequalled by the poets of the Elizabethan age.

Here is the translation of a love-letter written by a Hawaiian schoolboy to a Hawaiian schoolgirl:—

"Love to thee, by reason of whom my heart sleeps not night or day, all the days of my dwelling here. O thou beautiful one for whom my love shall never cease. Here also is this: At the time I heard that you were going to Wailuku, I was enveloped in exceeding great love. And when I heard you had really gone,

great was my regret for you and exceeding great my love. My appearance was like a sick person who cannot answer when spoken to. I would not go down to the sea again because I supposed you had not returned. I feared lest I should see all the places where you and I had conversed together, and walked together, and I should fall in the streets on account of the greatness of my love to you. I however did go down, and I was continually longing with love to you. Your father said to me, 'Won't you eat with us?' I refused, saying I was full. But the truth was I had eaten nothing. My great love to you, that was the thing which alone could satisfy me. Presently, however, I went to the place of K——, and there I heard you had arrived. I was a little refreshed by hearing this, but my eyes still hung down. I longed to see you, but could not find you, though I waited till dark. Now, while I am writing, my tears are dropping down for you; now my tears are my friends and my affection to you, O thou who wilt for ever be loved. Here also is this: Consent thou to my desire, and write me, that I may know your love. My love to thee is great, thou splendid flower of Lanakahula."

It was a great Englishman, was it not? who said: "They who drink beer, think beer." Hawaiian children drink the wine of oleander flowers, of wild carnations, of orange blossoms, and of pale, perfumed lilies. They think as their eyes and their brains drink. When they wish to speak of peace, they say "cool shade." When they wish to speak of hope, they use a compound word as beautiful as it is graphic, they say "*manaolana*," the "swimming thought." From their babyhood they learn that life often depends upon ability to swim. They hope for life, they swim for it. They hope for something less tangible. Their brains swim towards that something. They hope.

I find that I have also the translation of the answer

that a Hawaiian girl sent to the letter I have just quoted. It emphasises the instinctive poetry of the Hawaiian language, and it accentuates the cosmopolitanism of womanhood :—

"Love to you, who speakest sweetly, whom I did kiss. My warm affections go out to you with your love. My mind is oppressed in consequence of not having seen you these times. Much affection for thee dwelling there where the sun causeth the head to ache. Pity for thee in returning to your house, destitute as you supposed. I and the sister whom I most love spoke together, and said she, 'Let us weep.' So we two wept for you. And we conversed about you.

"We went to bathe in the bread-fruit yard: the wind blew softly from Lahainaluna, and your image came down with it. We wept for you. Thou only art our food when we are hungry. We are satisfied with your love.

"It is better to conceal this; and, lest dogs shall prowl after it, and it should be found out, when you have read this letter, tear it up."

I have given you the honest translation of two love-letters written by Hawaiian children, written in this the time of Hawaii's degeneration. What must Hawaiian love and Hawaiian love-letters have been when Hawaiians were as untaught and uncivilised as Hawaiian flowers are?

Hawaiian children, both boys and girls, are the most elegant swimmers in the world. They swim with all the aplomb of the swimming children of New Zealand, and with an added elegance that is quite their own. They ride and crest the fiercely pulsing waves that wash Hawaii's coral-fringed shores. They understand those waves, and live in them as no other children could.

They are great fishers, and know the haunts and the values of the rainbow-hued fish that link picturesquely Hawaii with Ceylon. They are expert dressers of bird skins and workers in bird's feathers. Twelve years ago the Queen of Hawaii gave our Queen Victoria a wonderful mantle of feathers. All Hawaiian children are deft in the weaving into garments of such feathers.

Hawaiian children are all expert in music and in songs as sweet as they are peculiar, and most of them are expert in the national dances, that are as eloquent as they are Polynesian, and, from our standpoint, questionable.

Hawaiian parents never coerce their children. Indeed, the forced obedience of children seems, when we study human history, as artificial, if as beneficent, as the potting and hothousing of flowers. Yet some of the brightest pages of the history of human heroism are those that record the sacrifices made and the hardships endured by Hawaiian parents for Hawaiian children; by Hawaiian children for Hawaiian parents.

The Hawaiians never had very large families, and now "only children," and childless marriages are the rule. There is a large child mortality in the Sandwich Islands, not, as has so often been asserted, because Hawaiian parents are intentionally neglectful, but because they are incredibly careless and happy-go-lucky; and, above all, because the race is decaying under the blight of missionary-bred civilisation. There is not one natural cause why Hawaiian children should be dying out. They have the greatest variety of wholesome, out-of-doors exercise—indeed, they live in the open air.

Nothing is more essential to the well-being of children, nor to the best increase and development of a race, than

beauty of natural surroundings. Children could not live in the midst of more perfect beauty than do the Hawaiian children. They are permeated with loveliness. Beauty saturates their daily life. They breathe beauty. Sir Edwin Arnold—with all his wonderful familiarity with beauty—was never moved to more eloquence of appreciation than he was by the beauty of Hawaii. And no one can bring the charge of exaggeration, or of having lost his head, against the poet who exclaimed:—

> "Hawaii nei—of many one thou art,
> Each scattered fragment an essential part.
> No jewelled setting is more fair than thee,
> An em'rald cluster in a beryl sea!
> Thy life is music—Fate the notes prolong!
> Each isle a stanza and the whole a song."

The climate is nearly perfect and perfectly healthy, and yet the children die in startling numbers. Oh, the folly! oh, the crime of forcing upon a people a form of civilisation or a form of religion for which it is radically unfitted! Surely both civilisation and religion were made for man, not he for them: made for his development and advancement, not for his deforming and retrogation! Do I seriously charge the missionaries with doing actual harm? I seriously and emphatically do—and a whole army of other faddists who are not missionaries. Do I not think that any and every possible mistake they make or harm they do is more than counterbalanced by the good they do? I believe that they almost never do any good, and that when they do it is pitifully microscopic. A large charge, but a vague one; and vague charges have no weight! True. I charge our foreign missionaries (British and American) with making the Anglo-Saxon

race internationally ridiculous. That in itself is not of grave importance; but it leads to results grave, far-reaching, and altogether evil. I charge them with involving us in endless and worse than needless international friction, which keeps up a constant state of soreness and of irritation that makes diplomatic relations very strained and diplomatic labour terribly difficult and often futile when matters of real gravity require international adjustment. I charge them with involving us in frequent bloodshed, as undignified as it is unchristian. I charge them with opening the way to war; with clogging the way to peace. I charge them with damming the spreading flow of true civilisations. I charge them with doing incalculable ethnological harm to the peoples they seek to proselyte. Grant their cause all holiness, grant that humanity with all its differences of race, of climate, and of condition should know no difference of religion, and I insist that the methods of the bulk of our missionaries to-day are as shamefully unworthy of Jesus the Galilæan, Jesus the gentleman, Jesus the Oriental, as the degrading, loathsome jugglings of the nefarious necromancers of modern China are unworthy the pure teaching of Laou-tsze, the Chinese teacher of truth and of righteousness.

Missionarying is delicate work, and unfit people seem terribly prone to undertake it. Let us by no means underrate the personal courage of the missionaries: but personal courage is not in the forefront—much less the first of essentials in the best missionary equipment. And are we not just a little over-generous in our praise of missionary courage, and of the risks that missionaries run? Is their courage so unselfish as we think it? At what else could

the average missionary make so good a living? I say the average missionary. Not at secular soldiering. The average missionary is well fed, well housed, and well clothed. Tommy Atkins takes his life in his hands and runs some risks, and we hold him adequately paid at a shilling a day. He is neither so daintily clad nor so cosily roofed as the private missionary. His menu is less varied, his pocket money less ample, and his personal freedom incalculably less.

After sincerity, which is, I suppose, the chief essential, in every worth-while pursuit, I hold the chief essential for the worth-while missionary to be adequate education. Very few missionaries are adequately educated. The majority are ill educated from any generous standpoint. Almost all are poorly educated from the scholarly standpoint of the peoples to whom they turn their attention. Missionary enthusiasm becomes impertinent when it is coupled with entire ignorance of the fruits of the religion which it seeks to destroy.

Are missionaries sincere? Some are. Some are not. A large number are unconsciously insincere. Are no missionaries unselfish? Unselfishness is more difficult of identification than any other human trait. But I have known many missionaries who were heroically unselfish or selfish with that fine enjoyment of the better part which is better than unselfishness. Are no missionaries adequate in sympathy and scholarship? A glorious minority are. Sir Harry Parkes was; Professor Griffis is. Such men conserve international dignity, enrich literature, and do some good and no harm to the peoples among whom they journey. But what of it? Zola is French; he is not France. One scholar does not form a university.

I write of the missionaries *en bloc* and "*J' accuse! J' accuse!*"

I am not writing in enthusiastic ignorance. I have known many missionaries. I have watched their working and their work in many places. I have near kinsmen who are missionaries. I regret to remember that my father's family (for which I have an intense love) has been prolific in missionaries. I have a first cousin now a missionary in Persia. I make many enemies and hurt some friends when I speak a moiety of what I honestly feel upon the question of foreign missions. What of that?

There is an old saying of St. Jerome, which Hardy quotes in *Tess*, and which means as much to me as anything that was ever written: "If an offense come out of the truth, it is better that the offense should come than that the truth should be concealed."

All Hawaiian children ride like young centaurs, and almost every child has a pony. They rarely walk when they can ride. I have seen them vault into the saddle to go little more than across the street and back. Children who are too little to walk ride the fleet little nags, ride perched upon a blanket behind the saddle, and tied to the waist of mother or father or uncle or granddad. The Hawaiians ride barefooted, holding their stirrups between their toes and with their spurs (if they wear them) strapped upon their naked heels.

They are sunny, pretty, pleasant children, brightly but slightly clad. They study well and learn well and readily. They engage in a dozen forms of distinct athletics, but the only great exertion they make is to be amused. For that they will take any amount of trouble. They chatter

incessantly, but never ill-naturedly. They are madly fond of flowers and devoted to pets. Each Hawaiian woman and child (and many men) has a pet. I have often seen a curly-tailed pig following a flower-decked maiden, following with all the dignity of a pet pug.

They are fond of games, and know very many. They all walk on stilts, and I know no other children that do it so well, not even in northern Scandinavia nor in Siberia. Other children may compare with them in riding and dancing, even in swimming perhaps; none at all compare with them in stilt-walking. And their stilt-dancing is marvellous and beautiful.

Hawaiian children live upon terms of easy familiarity, but not disrespect with their elders. The Hawaiians have always shown consideration to age and to infancy. In the old days, when war raged, old people and children, and such wives of warriors as did not go with their husbands into battle, were sheltered in caves, and those caves were doubly impregnable, for they were sanctuaries.

Like most races of natural beauty the Hawaiians are personally clean. They eat with their fingers, plunging them into the seething cauldron of *poi* or into the rose-red heart of the bursting melon. They always cook out-of-doors (as do all the peoples of Polynesia) and they usually eat there. But after the *al fresco* meal you will see the rudest baby in Hawaii toddle to the nearest water gourd or brooklet to wash its mussy little hands.

Both the limitations and the colour of a little Hawaiian's vocabulary are very interesting. They have no words for "Thank you," or for any sort of gratitude. They smile and say "Good!"—for they are quickly appreciative of kindness or courtesy. They have no

word for weather, nor have they any conception of it. They have no weather!

They all dance and they are all musicians. To say that their music and their dancing is in the extreme eccentric is but to say that it is Polynesian. They dress wonderfully for their dancing, and preface a dance with a vocal chorus. Many of the children are professional dancers.

They wrestle well, they box well; but none of their pastimes are prettier to watch than their ball-catching. A Hawaiian child makes its own balls — packing leaves together and tying them with strong, delicate grasses. I used such a ball for years as a sachet, and even now its dust is sweet. They throw up their balls and catch them, not in their hands, but first on one end and then on the other of a pointed stick. When they grow tired of stick-catching and resort to the easier hand method, they scorn to keep fewer than three balls in the air at once, and to keep five or six up simultaneously is no great feat.

The name of a Hawaiian child does not indicate its sex; they have no surnames; they often change their names, and repeatedly; and many of them are known by several names.

The Hawaiians are always visiting; they cannot stay alone, though strangely enough they are rather addicted to solitary mealing. They live in each other's houses, or rather just outside them. With them the family tie is often weak, but the social tie is always strong. A child is often given away and even passed from family to family until it and everyone else forgets whose child it was at the start. Yet this is never done from cruelty, not even from indifference, but to better the child's circumstances. The

family into which a child is adopted is always better off than the family from which it is taken, and the child's own inclination is almost always consulted.

They all—Hawaiian young and old—touch life very lightly; and of such work as they do they make a pastime and a frolic.

All the Hawaiians are expert surf bathers. I have seen a lame man give an exhibition of natorial skill that would have made him an aquarium lion in Europe. They ride the surf—young and old, men and women and tiny children—lying or standing upon their surf-boards. "Wave sliding board" the Hawaiian calls his sea plank, and very carefully he oils and grooms it. It is a tough, coffin-lid shaped board of bread-fruit wood. A man's is about eight feet long and two feet wide. The ordinary riders crest the high waves lying on their boards, face downwards; but the more accomplished kneel. The artists stand up, and sing, and wave their arms, and balance now on one foot now on the other, rushing through the tremendous surf at an actual velocity of forty miles an hour. Imagine the scene, when the surf is strong and the entire population of a vicinity is riding it! But it is not to be imagined. It must be seen. Hawaii itself beggars all description; and the people match the place.

Women hold a place of unique privilege in Hawaii. Rank was always inherited from the mother. The men monopolise many branches of work that we associate with women. Men nurse all the babies, and mind the children—the little that they need minding. If a schoolmaster has a young child—a wee, wee baby—he takes it to school with him, and tends it carefully while he teaches. The mother goes a-visiting or riding.

All the teachers are men. I'm inclined to think that wise, very wise. The school is in the open. Teacher and taught sit in the shadow of the pepper trees, or beneath the sandal woods, or in the cool iron-wood copses, or on the soft, white sand with "its plumy palms drowsing on the shore." The chances are that the pupils have swum to school. Swimming is a favourite method of locomotion with this delightful people as well as a passionately-liked recreation. In the Sandwich Islands the wee babies wear an incredible amount of clothing—but no one else does. The small boy (or girl) who swims to school, carries his few garments in one hand and paddles with the other; for even the tiniest mites are careful of their gay clothes. As he paddles along he sings, and the green water drenches his necklace of fragrant clematis and ginger flowers, and the fine spray falls upon his head-wreath of roses and lilies, of begonias and asparagus fern.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOME CHILDREN THAT I KNEW IN PENANG.

"Innocent child and snow-white flower!
Well are ye paired in your opening hour.
Thus should the pure and the lovely meet,
Stainless with stainless, and sweet with sweet."

PEOPLE of many races have settled and live in Penang, and travellers and traders of as many more are constantly passing through and pausing in that lovely island, where pine-apples and babies grow and thrive like potatoes, and brilliant butterflies are as big as bats.

To the student or the lover of child-life, Penang is the happiest of hunting-grounds. The children are there in lavish abundance and in extravagant variety; and the climate and the social conditions are such that most of the children, to all intents and purposes, live out-of-doors, and are most approachable. To be sure, the Malay children are shy, but not painfully so. They are shy because it is Malay nature to be so; but their shyness stops short of excessive timidity, because Penang is always crowded with travellers — travellers big with curiosity, travellers to whom and to whose small coins the little natives have become placidly accustomed.

The Malay children are the children truly native to Penang, but the children of the Chinese far outnumber them; and there, as all through the Straits Settlements,

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you will find a heavy sprinkling of little Hindus, Klings, Arabs, and Goanese. Indeed, the children of a dozen and more races play among the sensitive plants and the orchids, the bread-fruit trees and the blazing hibiscus flowers. And in the early morning or towards the evening's cool, smiling lily-white European babies are carried or led up and down the streets of the English quarter. During my two visits to Penang I gained the acquaintance of quite a collection—and a varied collection—of children. I even took one priceless Malay of nine summers away with me when I left. He was engaged, and at a very liberal salary, to act as personal attendant and playmate to my little four-year-old son. And he did! He helped to dress him. He obeyed him with the obsequiousness of a slave, and ignored or defied the rest of us with the hauteur of a Rajah. He tried to teach his young master to chew betel and to tame lizards, and he all but drowned him in a frantic attempt to teach him to swim. To Malay Mamat, a boy of four who could not swim was a monstrosity. The Malays are (with the exception of a few mountain tribes not living in the Straits Settlements) an aquatic people. They swim, and fish, and row, and scull, and sail, and pole, and boat-build instinctively. They take to the water before they can walk. And no Malay will build his house on dry land, if he can build it on a marsh or over the edge of water.

Mamat was with us some months. He left us abruptly one morning while we were at breakfast. It was at Singapore, and all the police corps failed to find him. He left without saying "Salaam" or asking for the few rupees of remuneration then due to him. But he took with him quite a bundle of jewellery and trinkets; among

them a ring set with a large and beautiful emerald. I have often wondered what Mamat finally did with it, how he disposed of it, what he got for it. It was a stage ring—a "prop," in fact--that I had worn home from the theatre the night before by mistake, and thrown on my dressing-table. It was a handsome ring, but the emerald was glass. Poor Mamat! he had one talent, and to the best of my discovering, but one—a talent for theft. I had done my best to down it, to kill it; but it conquered in the end, and surmounted all difficulties, as talent usually does, or is supposed to do, the wide world over. I sometimes fear that Mamat left me a worse boy than he came to me, but for my own—purely my own—part, I can never quite regrét the few months that he was my baby-boy's *chokera*, for he taught me much, about the Malay character and Malay mentality, that I should otherwise never have learned.

The most interesting child I knew in Penang was a Dyak boy from Borneo. The Dyaks are wild Malays, and, as I have said, the children that numerically predominate in Penang are Chinese children. But in writing of the children of Penang precedence belongs, I think, to the Malay children—the little ones of the civilised inhabitant Malays. They are the most really aboriginal. The other children of the island have come from other countries, and (though many of them are born in the Straits Settlements) have the habits and lead the lives of other climes. The Malay children are polite, gentle, and at times indolent. They care for stirring land games less than they do for aquatics. But they play all games with vim. On the water, or in the water, they will work or play with the most energetic agility, and for

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hours at a time. They have a surprisingly wide and exact information as to the names of the animals, the birds, the fish, the insects of the island. Nor are they one whit more ignorant about the Oriental lush of vegetable life that makes Penang perhaps the garden of the world. They often astonished me with their nice knowledge of nature and of the natural objects about them. They were little, slim, naked, mild-eyed, lethargic, half-civilised children for the most part. And yet, when I came to know them and question them about the trees and flowers and birds, I found them almost encyclopedic, and they were so sweetly simple over their learnedness. It was a matter of course to them, a simple, everyday part of their Malay nature. Every Malay child has a great power to tame the shyest of the so-called "wild animals." To us it seems almost weird. But if we were, and had been for centuries, as kind, as charitable, as gentle towards the squirrels and the birds as the Malays have been for centuries, and are, our children might as easily make playmates of the timid things that fly and crawl and scurry, as do the native children of the Malay Archipelago.

The Malay children are born and educated Mohammedans, and so, many of their customs—especially those pertaining to boyhood and sanitary living—are identical with those of the Mohammedan boys of Constantinople or Calcutta.

"A gentleman with a nose ring for a wardrobe" was the laughing European comment made upon a small Malay, who bowed most politely as he presented me with a bouquet of orchids, ixoras, and orange flowers. But my friend was wrong. The small Malay had a big sandalwood box at home—a box full to the brim with most

splendid raiment. But all this superfluous finery is kept for gala days, and ordinarily its young owner runs about with free, unfettered limbs. Sensible Malay mothers! Happy Malay boys! Happy children to lave their innocent, growing, naked bodies in the living wine-like sunshine that "unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil!" Happy children to clothe themselves with ropes of rich-scented, soft-petalled, Eastern flowers, as they romp gently beneath the nutmegs and sago palms! Happy children to stand and bathe and cool their unclad selves in the drenching, fierce, brief rain that falls almost daily, giving drink to the thirsty ferns and washing the hot faces of the flowers, until—the short, wild storm over—Penang looks even lovelier than it looked before!

Almost every Malay boy of ten or more can build himself a boat—not a toy boat, but a useful, if very narrow craft. He hews his little canoe-like boat out of soft but water-tight wood, and he never comes to grief in it, though a European is apt to upset it if he only looks at it, much less steps into it.

Almost every Malay boy is a skilful tiger-hunter, but he goes to work in a very un-European way. He builds a tiger-pit; he chooses a likely spot in the jungle, or often near the edge of a newly cleared jungle, for it is there that the tiger is most apt to seek its human prey. He digs his pit fifteen or twenty feet deep. How does he get out himself when it is finished? He climbs out on a bamboo ladder that he makes before he begins to dig. Every Malay boy can make a bamboo ladder and fasten it securely. At the bottom, the pit is large enough to hold the largest tiger. The sides slope outwards as they slope upwards, and the opening at the top is several times as

large as the pit's floor. They used always to drive a huge sharp stake, point upwards, in the pit's bottom; but an unwary traveller falling into such a pit was pierced by the stake and killed. Since then it is unlawful to use the stake, and the law-abiding Malays rarely do.

Though neither fond of nor skilful in very many different out-of-door games, there are several out-of-door, and not aquatic, industries in which the Malay boys are carefully trained. They learn to shoot well, for in many parts of the Malay Peninsula and of the Malay Archipelago the procuring of birds' skins and plumage, for dealers, is a chief, or even the chief, native industry. Boys and girls are skilful in making snares and traps of bamboo and strong string-like grasses: traps in which perhaps as many birds are caught as fall prey to the young Malay's nice marksmanship.

The small Malay is an expert and indefatigable catcher of edible insects. Beetles and dragon-flies are favourite Malay dainties. The little dragon-fly hunter roams slowly among the wild, breast-high rhododendrons and the tall banana trees, swaying lightly and slowly a notched bamboo. In the notch is a lump of lime, on which the insects settle, and by which they are securely caught. The flies come by the hundreds and hundred hundreds, and just as rapidly as they come the small boy's slim, brown fingers seize them, tear off their wings, limbs, and heads, and thrust the edible bodies into a pouch-like basket that hangs at his side. The Malays kill animals and insects, but they never tease them.

The small Malay climbs magnificently, going easily and gracefully up the tallest, straightest, and smoothest tree. He climbs on bamboo pegs, which he drives as he climbs.

If the tree be very difficult, he makes his ladder security itself with thongs of tough grass, climbing rattans, or strong shreds of bamboo skin. But he never climbs a tree for fun; he goes up for edible birds'-nests or for honey and young bees. The Malays, catching the wild bees young, domesticate and tame them most successfully. Large tracts of Malay land are volcanic, and subject to terrible earthquakes. In these parts, time is computed, dates kept, and the children's ages counted from the last earthquake.

The adult Malays are plain and unprepossessing to a degree in appearance, but the children are always comely, and often very lovely. They lose their good looks, I fancy, through hardship and bad habits. They chew betel and tobacco almost from babyhood. They live in an endless succession of feasts and famines. They are temperate in almost nothing. Their irregularities of life are extreme. They often suffer great exposure while fishing, and they know periods of great privation. They live in houses, under each of which is a cesspool. This filthy habit is a survival of the days when all Malays lived upon the water and in boats. In those days it was both convenient and sanitary to eject all refuse through the side or bottom of the dwelling. The Malays are not naturally dirty, but they are tenacious of old customs, slow to change in all things, very slow to harbour a new idea. They are not an intellectual people, and their civilisation is not indigenous.

Malay children very rarely quarrel. They never indulge in practical jokes; though the adult Malays both play and resent them keenly. They never sing, or laugh, or shout when alone, and not often when together. They are docile and obedient. On the other hand, Malay

parents rarely chide, and almost never interfere with their children, but leave them to grow and thrive as the flowers and ferns do among which they grow.

The Malay boys — and indeed the girls too — have another method of bird-catching beside those I have mentioned. They imitate the calls and cries of different birds wonderfully. In this way they capture many birds that are extremely difficult to shoot or trap or snare with lime. The talking-mina and love-birds are especially susceptible to voice capture. The minas are the most surprising talkers. Their imitation of human articulation surpasses, I think, that of all other talking birds.

Often thirty or forty bamboo bird-cages, always exquisitely made, comprise almost the entire furniture of a house. The pet birds live on terms of all intimacy with the family, and are really religiously cared for.

If there is a baby in a Malay family it has a bamboo cradle, like the bird-cages, made exquisitely, and, like them, hung from the roof or wall.

More often than not a Malay child has a pet ape, and it is taught to make itself useful in many ways. It will not only, at a word or signal, climb a cocoanut tree and bring down one or more of the ripest, nicest nuts, but often it will bring or throw the exact number it is told to bring. It will climb other fruit trees and bring down most carefully and safely delicate and perishable fruits. It gathers grain and sorts rice, and helps on the little farm and with the very simple housework.

The Dyaks, the Head Hunters, the wild tribes of Mâlaya, are in many ways the most interesting, ethnologically, of all peoples. And in no way are they more so than in their manners and customs connected with birth.

There are two great divisions of Dyaks—the Land Dyaks and the Sea Dyaks. The word Dyak is generally, but incorrectly, used to denote all the wild people of Borneo. But the name properly belongs to but one race —a race inhabiting parts of the north-west coast and the mountainous parts of the interior: a race not strictly aboriginal to Borneo.

Among several tribes of the Land Dyaks the only garment ever worn by man or child is a "seat-mat"—a leopard skin fastened about the belt and worn behind, used neither for decency, warmth, nor ornament, but merely and solely to sit upon.

The Land Dyaks never tattoo, but the Sea Dyaks tattoo their children lightly on arms, neck, and shoulder. All Dyaks are superbly superstitious, and they teach their children to interpret dreams and to rely upon bird auguries. The children of the Land Dyaks are almost always very clean and distinctly attractive.

The Sea Dyaks live upon the water and in the jungle of the sea's edge. Their life is a life of extreme hard work. Their exercise and industry have a violence that would be excessive in the hard-working peoples of the most invigorating climates of the temperate zone. It, of course, follows that their children are superlatively hardy and muscular. They are great and wonderful walkers, and they have knotted and wonderful legs. But even the children have deformed and twisted fingers with enlarged knuckles. This comes from the constant carrying of the parang or heavy jungle knife. No Sea Dyak is ever without one when on shore or out-of-doors. They use it chiefly to hack the young jungle away. And without it they could not venture to penetrate, as they daily do,

into the indescribable density of the jungle vegetation. Every inch, for miles often, is crowded with immense forms of vegetable life. The stems of vines are as thick as trees, and the undergrowth is remarkable for its treachery even in an oceanica of treacherous beasts and plants.

The children of the Land Dyaks are cheerful and grateful and exceptionally honest.

No one can travel around the world watching carefully the children of the peoples without noticing in how surprisingly many and unrelated nations the children amuse themselves by playing cat's-cradle. No other children make such wonderful cat's-cradles, so many varieties, and so swiftly as the Dyak children do, using natural strings of vines or long grass or leaf fibre.

Among no other people is the curious custom which compels the father of an unborn child to abstain from certain forms of food, occupation, and recreation, and to wear upon him some distinguishing mark or garment, so universal and so elaborate as it is among the Dyaks.

There are many restrictions and exactions laid upon the daily life of an expectant mother, but very many more are laid upon the daily life of an expectant father.

The Eskimo women who have the hope of motherhood bind their hair in a green snood. Under similar circumstances the Land Dyaks hold an "At Home," a function of rice and sacrifice of fowls, of incantation and chanting, and other forms of Oriental sound; forms never forgotten if once heard, but unspeakable of our English vocabulary. For forty-eight hours no one may enter or leave the house in which the thanksgiving ceremony or *beauri* is held. Until the hoped-for little Land Dyak is born its father

must take great care to strike nothing, to tie nothing tightly nor with bamboo shreds, to use his parang or chopping-knife for no household work—indeed, to use it for nothing but the most needful farm-work, jungle-cutting, or in self-defence. In brief, he must do nothing violent or violently. He must be gentle with all animals, and under no circumstances touch fire-arms. Any disregard or forgetting of these rules will stunt or deform the child, or change its sex, which is most unlucky.

When the child is born the father must remain in the house for over a week, and must live upon rice and salt. Nor may he go out at night until the child is a month old. If he does, the baby will cry lustily through every moment of his absence. No father may bathe until his child is five days old. Should he indulge in any food other than salt and rice his baby's stomach will swell horribly and other deformities befall it. The house and the family of a new-born child are tabooed for nine days.

As soon as a Sea Dyak woman finds herself enceinte both she and her husband must carefully refrain from any number of things. They must neither cut cotton or cloth or touch the handle of a knife or dirk, they must not tie anything or drop a stone, or make a basket, or dig, or place a post, or kill or hunt an animal. These and fifty other *peuti*, as these restrictions are called, continue until the child has three teeth.

Dyak cradles are hollowed tree-trunks, and, like the Malay cradles, are hung from the ceiling. Young or delicate children are wrapped in pungent tree bark.

Dyak mothers carry their children on the left hip, or in a sling on the back.

The Sea Dyaks used to bury a baby (dead or alive)

with its dead mother. Our Government forbids this, but no Dyak woman will nurse a child so spared. To do so would bring bad luck upon her own children.

Deformed and idiot children are often destroyed, but infanticide is very rare, and the killing of unborn children unheard of.

On the day of its birth and the two succeeding days a Dyak baby is bathed in the room in which it is born, and in a shallow tray-like dish of wood. On the fourth day it is carried with much pomp and circumstance to the river. And after that it has, at the very least, one river bath a day. At the first river bath a fowl is sacrificed on the bank. Part of its blood is spilt into the stream, as a libation to the water spirit. If the sacrifice is graciously received no accident on or by water will ever befall the little Dyak. The importance of this immunity to so aquatic a people cannot be over-estimated. Before the child is dipped into the stream its feet are anointed with the remaining blood. That is to save it from ever tripping or being snake-bitten in the jungle.

The heads of all Dyak children are shaven at birth (they are almost always born with quite a wig), and are kept shaven until the youngsters can run and walk and talk. But a small square patch of hair is always allowed to grow above the fontanel. The Dyaks seem to have considerable anatomical knowledge.

Dyak children are often nine years old before they are named. They are often allowed to choose their own names. After a serious illness a child's name is always changed. That's for luck, of course.

The Dyaks swim as soon as they walk. They always jump into the water feet first.

The fiercest of the Head Hunters seldom take a woman's head, and never a child's.

Dyak women and children have a hundred privileges. For one example, they may eat deer's flesh, which is forbidden to the men of most tribes. Why? Deer's flesh is taming.

They are wonderful climbers. Greased poles are climbed by old and young, and tiny mites pull up them and slip down them gleefully and skilfully.

Dyak children have practically no toys. I should call them the toyless nation. Even the little Eskimo has more playthings than the little Dyak has. I never saw but one Dyak plaything—a boat of braided mat. And there are, I believe, no records of Dyak toys beyond a remark of Rajah Brooke's, to the effect that he knew a boy or two who had bows, arrows, and swords, or shields and spears, and that he had heard of one or two others who had tops or wooden animals on wheels. I am quoting from memory, but I read that remark in some authoritative book, and I think that it was the Rajah's.

The Dyaks are very devoted to their children, and never punish them. It is held the deepest disgrace to be childless, and children are adopted eagerly by adults who have no little ones of their own. Boys are prayed for with great ceremony and sacrifice; but girls are every bit as well treated, and even more cared for. All Dyak children are spoilt, and all are as brimfull of mischief as monkeys are. They are encouraged in this mischievousness, for the Dyaks expect great things from the after-life of an especially mischievous child. The naughtiness of the Dyak weenies is weird and awful. I could not exaggerate it, if I tried. But the children of seven or

more are most considerate of their parents and relatives: not out of fear but out of love. These little savages will refrain from any fun rather than grieve or vex their parents. Truly family love is a passion reciprocal, tender, intense, beautiful, and holy, and firmly embedded in the hearts of this strange, contradictory people: the wild folk of Borneo.

Dyak men nurse their children even more than Dyak women do.

Little as we may know of the Dyaks, we all know that they are a people of martial and physical prowess. But I find a tendency, even in Europeans who have lived and travelled among them, to speak of the Malays as rather spineless and physically inert. This is a grave mistake. Even the Malay children are really notable athletes. They go tobogganning on the water, down restless rivers and rollicking waterfalls, with a fearlessness the little tobogganists of Canada never dreamed of, and with a skill and grace not second to the grace and skill of the adult surf-riders of Hawaii. Half their leisure time is spent in picnicing: picnicing of a most athletic and vigorous sort. Their fishing picnics are functions of uninterrupted exertion. The Malays take their pleasures with a tirelessness, a gusto, and a ferocity that claims the admiration of sports-loving Britain. They are a people of contradictions, as most peoples are; but they are absolutely consistent and ceaseless in their love and practice of manly and invigorating exercises.

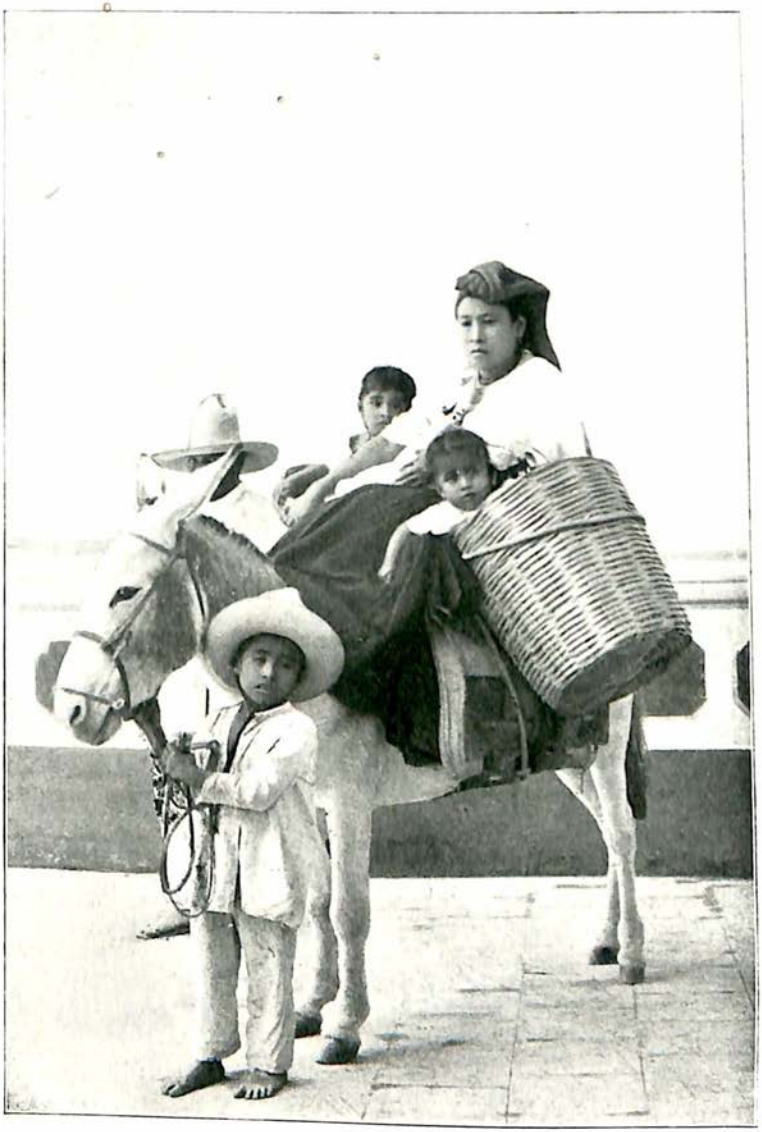
CHAPTER XXIII.

MEXICAN MITES.

"Pleased by any random toy:
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake;
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought
Matter for a jocund thought;
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf."

SAD children are sadder to think of, to look at, than any other of earth's myriads of things sad. Most of Mexico's little ones are born into sadness, live in sadness, grow up to sadness. Mexico is rich in glorious and gorgeous memories, and big with hope and promise of wealth and weal to come. But between her splendid past and her splendid future she stands a-halt in a present full of dearth. Stands!—no! She is bowed to the ground, and her lips, once crimson with the wine of lavish plenty, are grey-steeped in dust and poverty, and a sad proportion of her children—little children—are hungry.

They live in a land brilliant with flowers and lush with



GOING TO MARKET

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fruits and cereals. But for all that their lot is not free from pathos, as they are the children of a race with a great past, a questionable future, and a not altogether happy present. Many of the Mexican children are strangely handsome, with a sad, mature-looking beauty. Almost all of them are of mixed Indian and Spanish blood. All of them are artists.

The Spaniards who conquered Mexico and the Indians who were there at the time have mixed themselves up in a racial tangle that we are absolutely unable to unravel. But for all that, the half-breed children of Mexico are to-day, in many matters and in most manners, more like the children of old Spain than are the children of modern Spain. The American-Indians are the most conservative people on earth. The conservativeness of a Chinaman is flippant compared to the conservativeness of an American-Indian. The Indians of Mexico, having through marriage adopted the customs of old Spain—the Spain that Cortez knew—have preserved these customs as they have not been preserved in Cordova or Madrid. The usages of old Spain have become bone of the Mexican bone, flesh of the Mexican flesh, and will so remain, so long as Mexico remains a characteristically individual nation. To-day in Mexico (especially in the least-travelled parts) the daily lives of the children are more like the daily lives of the children over whom Ferdinand helped Isabella to reign than are the daily lives of the children who to-day sun themselves in the bright realm of Spain's boy-king.

I have said that most of the children of Mexico are of mixed blood. There are, however, a few proud old Mexican families who have never married with the

natives. Certainly the children of these few families are the fairest to look upon of Mexico's youngsters.

When, almost four hundred years ago, the Spaniard pushed his way from the West Indies into the Mexican mainland he found himself in contact with a wonderfully interesting people—a people having an art, a literature;—in brief, a civilisation both older and finer than his own. This people, that so surprised the ancient Spaniard, so challenged his attention and commanded his admiration, that contact between him and it gave birth to a new literature, and tinged all his after national life, is a people extinct. Yet no people, in many special ways, more interesting ever existed. And because of a something in the faces of some of the children of Mexico to-day—a something that we feel to be an inheritance from the Mexicans that Cortez knew—a peculiar interest hangs about the children that we may see to-day strolling up and down the *adobe*-walled streets or playing in the cactus-lined lanes of Vera Cruz.

The aboriginal race of America is a great race, great in its history, great even now in its inherent possibilities. No other race has ever dominated so large a portion of the globe's dry surface. With the exception (the probable exception) of the Eskimo, who hang like a human fringe upon the ice-bound skirts of the North Pole, the aboriginal Americans are of one blood, of one flesh, and of one bone. Climate, locality, environment, and fate have modified and differentiated the great unified race-type; but for all that it has remained at the core unchanged, and will remain so until it has rotted away seed, root, branch, and flower. In the Indians of the western plains of North America we may see how low the American race

can sink—has sunk. In the peoples of Mexico's heyday we may see how high the American race can rise—has risen. And because of this, many a little half-fed, altogether unclad Mexican has an importance and a dignity not his own, and yet his own—an' importance and a dignity that we feel, even while we laugh at his nudity, shrink from his rags, or toss him a copper coin towards the staying of his hunger. For in the poorest of the Mexican children we may see both the degraded, impoverished, improvident, and untaught Indians of the race's decadence, and traces (elusive, but unmistakable) of the refined, opulent, broadly provident, and highly educated Indians of the race's zenith. There are thousands and thousands of children in Mexico to-day who are, roughly speaking, Spanish, or Indian, or African, or more or less all three, who are yet something else—a something that marks them the breathing representatives of a defunct race—a something to which we must perforce take off our ethnological hats.

Many a deplorably plighted urchin walks the streets of Vera Cruz with an unconscious grace and power of carriage that is Atzec. There are no more graceful children living than the children of Mexico. And yet they take but little exercise. In the old days, the days before the Spanish conquest, the Mexicans were trained and encouraged to exercise both wisely and well.

The *tonalpouhqui*, or "sun calculator," was a person of much importance in Mexico's old *régime*. He determined the day and hour for the new-born child's lustration. The lustration was a very solemn function—a baptism performed in chief part by the child's nurse, who sang, and prayed, and spoke aloud, to the god, its name. Symbolic

gifts were brought to the child upon its lustration day. To a boy was given a tiny toy shield, and bows and arrows. To the baby girl they gave a diminutive distaff and spindle. These baptismal gifts were supposed to be both prophetical and influencing. The toy weapons and the shield indicated that the boy would grow to manhood and valour, fighting for his country and his king, and slaying many adversaries. And these martial playthings were put into his little hands as soon as he was able to play with them—put into his hands that propinquity might breed affection, and that the boy who played with weapons might be father to the man who loved to wield them, and wield them to a purpose. In the same way the spindle and distaff both pointed to and led to housewifely industry, accomplishment, and thrift. In Lord Kingsborough's interesting collection of Mexican picture-writing we may trace much of the course of the daily life of the children of old Mexico. In the first part of one picture three small circles are placed above the head of a child's figure, and beside it is drawn half a *tortilla*, or corncake. This signifies that the child is three years old, and is allowed half a *tortilla* at each meal. As picture follows picture in this pictorial history, we see girls being taught to grind corn and to cook, to weave and to spin. Then we see them, not being taught how to do, but doing — see them cooking, grinding, spinning, weaving. The boys in the corresponding picture-parts are learning to fish and ply their canoes; then they are carrying burdens, catching fish, and paddling their graceful little boats.

Such rare old Mexican documents are of very great interest to anyone who takes any genuine interest in the

great but now rapidly disappearing American race. And he who can and will spare or find or take the time to go apart and pore over those strange picture-pages, may read many a unique and fascinating page of human history. The close kinship between the crude picture-writings of the modern Dacotahs and the highly finished picture-literature and picture-histories of the ancient Mexicans is unmistakable. The pictorial art began with the Americans, merely as a means of necessary expression of thought, as a means of conveying messages. Such is almost exclusively the pictorial art of the American Indians to-day. Such for many years was the pictorial art of Mexico: pictures employed to express fact (and fact rather than thought) as frankly and as boldly as figures do. The pictures of Mexico were, and the pictures of the American Indians are, employed to tell a story, never to express an idea. Every Mexican child is in some sort an artist. And yet many such a child never thinks of using his fingers' natural cunning to adorn anything, but will sketch roughly the story he cannot write—cannot because he does not know A from Z, and only makes his easily legible hieroglyphics beautiful, as well as depictive, by accident and instinct.

Mexican children are not super-obedient, for they are rarely forced to obey. The children of old Mexico were well conducted in the extreme. A disobedient, unruly, or unseemly child was punished, and with a degree of severity determined not by the enormity of its waywardness, but by the frequence of that waywardness. Very bad small boys had their depraved little souls admonished through the pricking of their bad little bodies with the thorniest of all thorny things—the thorns of the prickly

Mexican aloe—and children utterly incorrigible had their naughty little faces held over pans of burning chillies. They were rather drastic, were the ancient trainers of Mexico's young. And they are Spartan, very Spartan, the poor Indians of our North American plains, both in their tribal punishments and in their self-inflicted tests.

The children of modern Mexico are, as a rule, untaught, or—what is infinitely worse—ill taught. They were adequately taught—adequately to the times, and to the highest civilisation possible to the time and the place. The school-houses of ancient Mexico were almost collegiate—in their dimensions at least. They were far-extended houses; each was built on to or near a temple. There the priest taught and the children learned. The children learned to feed the never-dying temple fires, to sweep the sacred floors, and deck the sanctuary walls. They were taught, and well taught—even the smallest pupils—to fast on each prescribed fast day. And they went to school almost as soon as they could walk, did the wee ones of old mighty Mexico. They were taught to do penance, and to do it very thoroughly. And very proper teaching I call that. For he who does keen penance—verily he repents! They were taught to draw their own blood when they were conscious of having committed a sin—a sin that called for atonement and needed absolution.

Almost the only branch known to our modern curriculums that was taught to the mites of ancient Mexico was moral philosophy. They had no text-books. But they learned the axioms and theorems of personal goodness by heart, as the children of old Greece committed

to memory the songs of Homer, as the devout Mohammedan learns the Koran, and the unlettered Zulu engraves upon his mind the laws of his people. And the language in which the priests of old heathen Mexico clothed the precepts of their nation's morality was of great length and of many words. Boys that were proved fit were chosen for soldiers, and were sent at the earliest possible age to learn the art of war and the trade of soldiery. They were sent to the hardest and most practical of schools. They were sent to live with soldiers, and were thrust into actual warfare as soon as their participation in battle might be a possible gain and not a positive loss to their country. The children of the nobility were taught and retaught history, and they were elaborately drilled in an elaboration of manner that might easily put the elegant courtesy of old Spain, and of last century's Japan, to the most vivid of blushes. After a year, or a few years, the children of artificers were sent back to their parents. The boy learned from his father that father's craft. The girl learned from her mother that mother's industry and domestic lore.

Such were the children of Mexico. They were clothed in purple of learning and fine linen of manner. They were watched over, guided, and fed. Now they are starved of brain and of belly; ragged of body, or even naked. They are unkempt and uncared for. They creep, or walk aimlessly, but cheerfully, out from their narrow naked homes into the luscious sunshine, and sit them down upon the hot, dusty, cactus-edged streets, and there take root and grow and blossom, like the brown human sunflowers that they are. They toddle about among the pepper trees and the jasmine flowers, and smile up at

you, oh! so contentedly!—more proud than not of their raiment, more coloured than was the coat of Joseph. It is the veriest patchwork of a garment. It has been gleaned from many a ragbag of "white" charity. *N'importe.* It clothes a warm little heart, and warms a cheerful little body. And the orange flowers are sweet! They lean grandly against the sun-cracked walls of their squalid homes, and look up at you with big eyes—eyes big with a proud, accomplished past, and bigger with an ashamed, baffled future. They sit or stand there athwart the sunshine, amid the thorny cacti and the smell of orange flowers; and there they make their toilets, if they have any to make; if they have not, they stand there, naked and unashamed, and importune you for coppers.

There is wealth in Mexico, and there is happiness, but they are more than exceptional enough to prove the rule; and the faces even of the babies of the three Mexican types—the Indian, the Spanish, the Indian-Spanish—are pinched, even when plump; pathetic, even when smiling.

"In the sweat of thy brow!" That comes hard, impossible almost, to many of us in our prime, our full of health and strength. But, "In the sweat of thy baby brow!" Think of it! "Unless thy baby fingers can toil, unless thy baby back can bear burdens, thy baby lips shall taste no bread, thy baby thirst know no cooling slake!" Picture it! And yet that is what the nineteenth century says to most of Mexico's youngsters. There's a nut, a cruel nut, for you to crack, you who are universal reformers. The nut is too hard for us who are only the lovers of children, and lack the skill to mend the world; and so we can only sigh and hope and pray

A CONTENTED INHABITANT

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and take a loving look at the customs and the doings of the not over-fortunately circumstanced children of the land of volcanoes and butterflies, of floods and of lightning.

Mexican children of the needy class used to be trained to two remunerative industries, to which they are trained no more—at least, the boys were. These two industries were diving for coins and running.

Diving for coins is a thriving industry in the waters of many latitudes, and in many longitudes; but there is nothing to prove that diving was brought to Mexico from other countries. But there are proofs and to spare that diving was for centuries part of the athletic training of the healthy Mexican boy. The boys of Mexico no longer dive for coins, because the law forbids it. So at least a high official writes, who was entreated to send me a vivid picture of a Mexican boy diving. Now here is news indeed!

In years not long gone by a goodly number of Mexican boys were, as soon as they could toddle, trained to run. They inherited supple limbs, strong thighs, tireless legs, and nimble feet from their fathers, and their grandfathers, and their great-grandfathers' great-grandfathers. They had little or nothing but poor humanity is common with Hamlet; least of all were they ever "scant of breath," nor were they often fat. When they grew to manhood and physical perfection they joined a corps, which formed the only trusted, the only reliable messengers of Mexico. They often ran three hundred and fifty miles in four and a half days. They made round trips of seven hundred miles in nine days, and were handsomely remunerated by twenty-five or thirty Mexican silver dollars. But this

is an item of Mexico's past. The law—the law of nature, not the law of Mexico—has stepped in and said, "Enough! No more!" The Mexican runners are dead, killed by their mad overwork, and the boys of Mexico are no longer trained to a livelihood that invariably proved suicidal. The boys who used to be trained to this business were always of quite or almost unmixed Indian blood. Traces of the old rushing national habit are quite discernible to those who study the children of modern Mexico. Those children, for all their stolid faces and pathetic eyes, for all their Latin languor of motion, are wonderfully quick and sleek of limb.

In the cities of Mexico the vast majority of the children are dressed very similarly to the children of European cities. In the wilds, the country, the hidden places of Mexico, the children wear garbs that are Indian, garbs that are Spanish, and garbs that are quaint and ingenious combinations of the characteristic habiliments of the two races.

Except only in Korea art is perhaps nowhere more a matter of course than in Mexico. Excepting the art of music, and possibly the art of architecture, Korean arts are more intricate and more interesting of detail than are the Mexican arts. But the artistic temperament is as general in Mexico as it is in Korea. Music is the birthright of every Mexican child. And they are almost without exception born with a facile, if not a great talent for a phase of plastic art. The Mexicans are marvellous modellers. The wee brown fingers of Mexican babies mould the ruddy Mexican mud into babies browner than themselves, and Mexican children of incredibly tender years pinch, and pet, and pat and poke, and coax moist

clay, wax, and other malleable materials into statuettes and tiny figures, which they sell in the Mexican market-places.

The poorer children of the city of Mexico spend a considerable part of their days in the market-places—in the bazaars. They peddle the little clay figures and the diminutive wax creatures that their deft fingers have shaped, and the sunshine in which they love to sit has baked; they hawk flowers and barter magnificent fruit for contemptible copper coins; they rush after you and catch you by the skirt and drag you back to their parents' booths. As a rule they know one English sentence. Let me record it: "Give me a penny."

Many a Mexican mother goes to the market-place. She tramps there with her baby on her back. Baby is firmly held in place by a long, strong scarf. The mother carries on one hip a basket woven of Mexican grass—a basket full almost to bursting with fruit, or artichokes, or the roots of rare orchids.

The children of Mexico have not many pets. But they all have familiar acquaintance with the typical Mexican domestic animal. Almost the poorest Mexican family has its mule. Save among the rich, the largest family rarely has but one such steed. Mexican families are not as a rule small, and the family mule is perpetually called upon to carry burdens that are enough to sour the disposition of a sweeter-tempered animal. White mules with black faces, black mules with white faces, and mules of every or any mulish colour or combination of colours are always on the move in Mexico. You will see them in the city streets, and they will effectually save you from feeling lonely when you tramp the country by-ways. The desti-

nation of a Mexican mule is—ten to one—the church, the market, or home. The eldest boy leads the mule. The father pushes the mule discreetly. The mother, all the children, and no mean proportion of the family goods and chattels ride the mule. His muleship, even under such circumstances, makes incredibly long journeys day after day; but he does not do it enthusiastically. Personally, I can think of no earthly reason why he should.

Music is an instinct with the children of Mexico. It isn't the blare of the new day; it's the glad matins of the birds that waken the Mexican mites. If those babes be half well born and half well housed they pay the birds for songs with songs. This is the unique custom: When day first breaks into the bedrooms of a Mexican house (and she breaks in very early, partly because Mexico is where Mexico is, and partly because the low houses have an abundance of windows)—when for these two reasons the sun does make so early an entrance, the head of the house gallantly welcomes it by leaping out of bed. If he is very old or very feeble he at least manages to lift himself from his pillow, and he begins to sing a song—a hymn of morning praise. If a priest be staying in the house, then that priest starts the vocal symphony. Nowhere in the Western world is the Christian religion so devoutly discipled as it is in Mexico. Nowhere save in Spain is Roman Catholicism so staunchly established as it is in Mexico. The Mexican babies learn to tell their beads long before they know the names of the many brilliant flowers that tangle about their brown feet. But whether the spiritual or the physical father of the household starts the morning hymn, all the household catch it up, and the wife, the grown children, the half-grown children, the

toddling babies, and last, but not even in Mexico least, the servants catch up the sweetly worded, but simply melodied song, and out beyond the cabins, the adobe hut, or the richly carved palace, the hewers of Mexican wood, the drawers of Mexican water, the tenders of Mexican grains and of Mexican flowers, join in the morning chorus. But sweetest of all those sweet Mexican notes ring the treble notes of the baby Mexican voices.

The children of Mexico are born, live, and develop under grave disadvantages; but Nature, even in Mexico, is the justest of stepmothers, and Nature compensates the children of Mexico for some, at least, of the disadvantages with which she scourges them. I do not know how a child can better start the big mornings of his little life than by singing with his father, his mother, and all the other people of his homestead, a song of simple welcome to the morning. And this is what the Mexican babies often sing when the Mexican sunshine first riddles the Mexican window-panes—an awkward English translation of the first lines of one of the first songs that a Mexican baby learns—

"Singers at dawn
From the heavens above
People all regions;
Gladly we too sing."

When a baby is born into Mexican society, or semi-society (a baby of pure Indian blood is out of both), its existence is announced in a very pretty, a very hyperbolic, a very Mexican way. To all her female friends and acquaintances the mother sends this message: "A new servant is at your disposal." A new servant indeed!

A servant who kicks you in the eye, and pulls your hair, and clutches at your lace, and yells at you almost as soon as it makes your acquaintance, and all in a breath! Never mind. Mexican etiquette requires the gurgling, crowing, cream-coloured, or brown-and-pink thing to be called your servant; so, so it is called. And Mexican etiquette (beside which the laws of the Medes and Persians were willow branchlings, the code of Draco a downy nothing) demands that you at once array yourself in your best and gaudiest, and hasten to the house of "new life" and admire the baby, and (if you are a woman) congratulate and recongratulate the mother.

Carlos is a typical boy of the Spanish-Indian or mixed type. He was born in a grimly picturesque village not far from the porphyry hill of Chapultepec. The entire village is sharply enfenced by cacti, which the natives carefully planted years ago. The fence is irregularly high, the height of its upper edge falling sharply from twenty to fifteen feet, rising as abruptly from fifteen to thirty. For only a very tall and peculiarly straight-growing variety of cactus has been used. The Mexicans call it *organos*, because it looks like a bunch of green or grey organ pipes. This is a very defensive fence, for neither the *ladrones* (professional robbers) who infest Mexico, nor any unfriendly animal will venture to rush upon or break through its prickly surface, and even the deadly *alacran*, crawling on its poisonous way, will turn aside rather than encounter the thousand knives of the *organos*. Carlos lives in as unique a house as any boy I know. Indeed, Carlos lives in many houses. He and his family move about once a moon—move perforce—move because the roof dies. Carlos's house (and those of many another

TWO CHARCOAL MERCHANTS: CARLOS AND HIS BURRO

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little Mexican) are, in the strictest sense of the expression, "home made." Books have been written about Mexico's palaces, with their priceless colonnades, their hanging gardens, their jewelled roofs, their exquisite details, in which carving is so fine an art that miles of stone have been cut and chiselled and polished into veritable embroidery, almost into lace.

Let us look at the other extreme of Mexican architecture. Let us watch Carlos's father and his brothers build a house. They select a site. Then they cut two, three, four, or more strong branches from the nearest tree. The cut ends of the branches are planted firmly in the ground, and Carlos piles stones upon the earth close about them, to secure them still more. The abundantly leafed tops mingle together with very little coaxing, and the roof is complete, and the house too. Doors and windows are not needed in such skeleton walls, where privacy is scorned. The house is furnished with a few mats and earthen vessels for water and earthen pots for cooking. The water-jars are beautiful in the extreme—huge violet or dull, deep Indian-red in colour, and charming in shape. Even the cooking-pots (although much less important in Mexico than the water-jars) are curious, antique, and graceful of outline. In this house, or such another, Carlos and his kindred live year in, year out. When the leafy roof dies and begins to fall, the family picks up its pans and jars and mats, and such babies as are too young to walk or crawl, and moves. They walk to another spot, build another house, and settle down. No wonder that Carlos grows up (as most Mexican children, rich or poor, do) to be both precocious and improvident. In his babyhood he toddled naked along the village streets, scraping

acquaintance with the dusty but sociable grasshoppers, lying down to sleep beside the dustier hedges of unsociable cacti, making friends with many a harmless snake. When he was tired, but not quite to sleepiness, he curled up beneath the pink and crimson shadows of the oleander trees, and watched with lazy pleasure the glowing beauty of the wild geraniums and blue plumbago flowers.

When he was a little older he was clad slightly and set to work. His first task was to take the gamecocks for their daily outing. The poorest Mexican settlement has its gamecocks. They are the pride of the village, and are tended far more carefully than the Mexican babies are. When not professionally engaged, they are zealously guarded, and once a day the village youngsters (or sometimes even the village oldsters) in solemn procession carry the birds to some shady or cool spot, and carefully securing one of each feathered warrior's legs to a string, and the string to a bush or stone, squat down in the sun and watch the birds tug at their fetters and breathe in the Mexican ozone. The birds strain and scratch, uprooting the tuberoses and bright zinnias. The sun beats down upon natural beds of salvias, so scarlet and so purple that they seem to throb with colour; it jewels again the jewelled wings of a hundred humming-birds that buzz in and out of the convolvulus festoons that hang so low, perhaps, because they are so heavy with a world of big blue blossoms. Butterflies, unmatched in beauty, hang a moment above the cotton plants, then dart to poise themselves upon the scarlet berries of the Mexican mistletoe. The boys crouch in the dust or the sun, making mud images, crooning slow, low songs, gambling on the coming Sunday's bull fight or circus, or gathering

bouquets to sell on the morrow in the nearest market-place (if it is a market-place frequented by Europeans and visitors from the States), bouquets of roses, numberless lilies, heavy-petalled orange flowers, flaunting tropeoleums, and pale pinks.

When Carlos was still a little older he became a charcoal pedlar. He and his little grey *burro* must earn their own living now, and unaided. Their life is hard, their pleasures few. Both adore *pulque* or aloe beer, but they seldom taste it, and are in luck if they get as much water as their dust-bred thirst craves. The *burro* loves to sleep, and to lazily munch the prickly pear bushes, but he is seldom or never a mule of leisure. Carlos loves to go to the theatre on Sunday and to watch the gaily tawdry processions of the festal days. But he has no broad-brimmed, ribbon-decked *sombrero;* no leather jacket, rich with elaborate embroidery, to wear; no gay *serape* to throw artistically over one shoulder. His hungry and healthily gluttonous boy's soul yearns for *frijoles* (small black beans) afloat in lard, for *mole* (the delicious curry the Mexicans make of only the Mexican knows what, but chiefly of pounded chilli), and his full red lips and strong white teeth long to crush into the guavas and mangoes, the peaches, the oranges, and the quinces, with which the market overflows. But Carlos is poor, very poor, and he rarely, if ever, has other fare than *tortillas*, seasoned with a little chilli sauce, or moistened with slices of melon. *Tortillas* are the staple, the almost unvaried food, of the Mexican poor. They are dry, flat, almost tasteless cakes, made of water and cornflour. They are patted into shape by the hands, and baked on hot bricks. The poor eat almost nothing else, and the rich never eat without them; and,

if you pass through the streets of a Mexican settlement, you will hear the pat, pat, clap of the womens' hands as they mould the *tortillas*, as surely as you will, in any inhabited part of Korea, hear the pound, pound, thump of the sticks of the washerwomen.

I have left myself but scant space to speak of the children of Mexican affluence. Well, they are sadly in the minority; but they are interesting, if for nothing else, at least for the fact that I have stated; that they live and dress and play exactly as did the Spanish children in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella—far more exactly than do the Spanish children of to-day.

All Mexican children can dance and sing, and model rather life-like and very characteristic little figures out of wax and clay. Most Mexican children, though inherently lazy, are fleet of foot, and possess great physical agility.

Snakes are the special pets of every Mexican boy, and it is the chief delight of all Mexican schoolboys to carry a harmless reptile to school to enliven the hours of enforced study. Mexican children learn to use a picture language, which reminds us of the vivid word-painting of the North American Indians. Humming-birds they call *chuperosas*, which means "suck roses." A peculiar long public vehicle, hung with bells, they call *casca bel*, or rattlesnake.

The Mexican children of unmixed Spanish ancestry are very beautiful. The Indian children of Mexico are quite the reverse. The children of mixed blood are pretty or plain in exact proportion to the predominance of Spanish or of Indian ancestry.

There is much that points to a bright future for Mexico, but her present is drear. Gone are her hanging gardens. Gone are her days of pageant, when her kings sat upon a

throne of gold or of jewels, and passed sentence, holding in their left hand a golden arrow, and in their right a human skull ornamented with silver and gems. Yes, Mexico has fallen upon evil days; and it saddens me to think of the children of this land of flowers, of sunshine, and of decay. They are children; and all children are very blessed and ought to be very happy.

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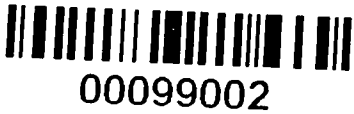
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